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CATHOLICITY

A TREATISE ON THE UNITY OF RELIGIONS

BY

REV. R. HEBER NEWTON, D.D.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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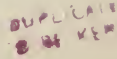

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Catholicity is the author's second posthumous volume. *The Mysticism of Music* appeared in 1915; the present volume would have followed sooner had not war reading so wholly absorbed attention as to make advisable a temporary postponement of its publication. These conditions still continuing—and the reconstruction literature to follow will be far greater than the war reports—there begins now a new turning on the part of the suffering people to religious thought. Stricken by personal or national grief, men and women are seeking understanding, assurance and comfort. The thesis of this book bears so directly on the theme of universality upon which statesmen and laymen are planning the future, that now the volume may find its readers and help them—be, in fact, part of their reconstruction literature.

The material here had all been given in articles, addresses and sermons, and nearly all had found

print in reports and magazines. Several of the present chapters had been, in substance or in their present form, parts of courses more fully developed on special lines; some were addresses before the Congress of Religions and the New York State Conference of Religion. All had belonged to the present sequence which Dr. Newton had had in mind, and which he wanted to give in book form.

The volume as it stands was, then, planned by Dr. Newton, the title chosen, and the contents determined—some parts definitely, some provisionally. Actual work upon the editing was started during the last year of his life. The present editing has been completed with no changes of material and, to the slight extent determined, no changes in arrangement. Familiarity with the author's thought and method made it tempting to supplement certain passages and to undertake a more thorough composing of the whole, as Dr. Newton would unquestionably have done. And the war, of which he saw only the opening months, is prepounding questions and offering clarifications so applicable to this discussion, that again there has

been the temptation to interpolate, as he would have done. But respect for the greater value of his own writing, though unedited, over attempted betterment by any other hand led to a preference of a slight sacrifice of finish of synthesis and style for assurance to the reader of original authorship.

F. M. N.

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CATHOLICITY

I

CHRISTIANITY A RE-BAPTIZED PAGANISM

Poe did not mention the names of all the company present on that famous evening when an Egyptian mummy came to life in the midst of the social group, and talked so eloquently about the industrial wonders which we moderns have imagined to be the discoveries of our own civilization, but which he showed were the familiar triumphs of the land of the Pharaohs. Suffice it to say, without betraying any confidences, that the day after that memorable entertainment certain of us of that company found ourselves in the Eternal City—by the agency of an "Atlantic Instantaneous Transportation Company, Limited," which

has not yet laid its prospectus before the public, and whose secret, a secret wrapped up in the awe that envelops the possibilities of our "magic carpet" air craft, may not therefore be divulged to the uninitiate. In this little company were an Ultramontane Priest, a Broad Church Parson, and a Westerner who swore by (and after) the great prophet of America, the *ir*Rev. Dr. Ingotsoll, together with the resurrected Egyptian who, in the course of the unrecorded conversation of the preceding evening, had disclosed himself as equally at home among the antiquities of religion. That cultivated, traveled, cosmopolitan of the ancient world had manifested a great curiosity concerning the ecclesiastical rites and usages of the religion that he found in possession of the world upon which he had so strangely reopened his eyes; and this extemporized jaunt was the result of that curiosity. We were walking one of the well-known streets of Rome on our way toward a certain church—a church, however, which no reader of these pages need consult his "Murray" to locate, until he has first found and studied that typical plant of which Goethe saw hints in the

flora of Weimar—when the conversation began that, as taken from the memoranda of one of the party, is sketched in the brief narration which follows: for brevity's sake, the *dramatis personæ* being somewhat cavalierly indicated simply as Pagan, Ecclesiastic, Broad Churchman and Philistine.

On our way, Pagan asked what we called the day. We told him that it was Sunday; "which," observed Broad Churchman, "was set apart by the edict of Constantine as a period of 'rest on the venerable day of the Sun.' " On his asking what were the other festivals of the Church, Ecclesiastic ran rapidly over the Kalendar, with such comments as these from Pagan: " 'Christmas'—our old Saturnalia; 'Easter'—the most ancient festival of the spring; 'Candlemas Day'—one of our joyous feasts in honor of the goddess Neith, observed as I note on the very day marked for it in your Christian Kalendar; 'Lady Day'—the old-time day of 'the Mother of the Gods,' also on the same date as our ancient festival; 'the Festival of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary'—our Roman Festival of the Miraculous Conception

of the Blessed Virgin Juno, again upon the same date which the ancient world observed." Pagan wanting to know somewhat of the saints of the Kalendar, Ecclesiastic chanced to dilate upon the story of St. Josaphat; of which he remarked: "Why this is none other than the legend of the Buddha himself."

As we passed along, the attention of our friend was drawn to various churches, and he was observed to inspect the inscriptions somewhat curiously; quietly remarking before one *façade*, "This looks as though the old Pagan legend had been Christianized by very slight touches. 'To the Divinity of St. George the Availing, the Powerful, the Unconquered' is plainly the old inscription, 'To the Divinity of Mercury the Availing, the Powerful, the Unconquered,' with 'Mercury' erased and 'St. George' carved in."

The form of many of these churches attracted Pagan's notice. "Here," he observed, "are the old Roman basilicas, those great halls of trade and commerce and justice, transformed into Christian churches." Arriving at last before the church to which we were bound, he paused to

examine the external aspect. "It is cruciform," he observed, "as were many of the old world temples. When the great temple of Serapis, in our own Alexandria, was demolished, beneath its foundation was discovered a cross. Your church faces east, as did our sacred temples, to receive the rays of the rising sun." The first thing which arrested his attention on entering was the font of holy water by the door. Ecclesiastic having explained its use, Pagan observed: "We had in many of our temples similar fonts of holy water, with the same significance. Worshipers washed their hands in them, on entering, admonishing themselves to come forward with pure minds to the service of the gods."

We then proceeded, at our friend's request, to examine more carefully the symbolism of the building, as presented everywhere on walls and columns. "Triangle and trefoil," he remarked, "are copied from the ancient temples, in which they were used to symbolize the mystery of the Divine Trinity in Unity. This Dove was likewise commonly used in the ancient churches as a symbol of the Divine Spirit. The Sacred Heart we had also.

Horus, the Egyptian Virgin-born Saviour was pictured carrying the Sacred Heart upon his breast. Vishnu and Bel were depicted in the same manner. Those three letters 'I. H. S.' formed the monogram of Bacchus. The curious oval frames in which I observe pictures of some divine woman"—"*Vesica piscis* we call the symbol," interposed Ecclesiastic—"these also were in our temples. They assure me of what I had already suspected, from many of the symbols which I have observed, that very much of your symbolism in this Christian church, however little you may suspect it, is drawn from that most ancient and most curious form of religion known as Phallicism. Your devout worshipers would surely be astonished and possibly revolted if they knew the original significance of these Phallic symbols. I presume you have spiritualized them as our devout priests had done in my time."

Pursuing our inspection of the sacred building, we came upon a peasant woman on her knees, counting her beads. "Such beads or rosaries," Pagan remarked, "were used by Buddhist monks. There were rosaries consisting of one hundred and

eight beads, sometimes made from bones of departed saints; each rosary representing a special prayer." "Ours have one hundred and fifty beads, each one representing an Ave or Pater noster," observed Ecclesiastic. "We had also reliquaries," continued Pagan, "in which sacred relics were kept, similar to these which I observe here. In one place in India, Buddha's robe was kept—probably quite as authentic a relic as the 'holy coat of Treves,' of which you have just told me. I do not think, however, that your priests have as yet come up to that magnificent relic of the Buddha, the shadow of Gautama, which was preserved in a certain cave, and which could only be seen by the faithful. These amulets or charms which your people wear are very much like those which were in use in my time. This church abounds in images and idols, as unfortunately did our temples; and, by the way, many of these figures are most certainly our old gods rebaptized. That St. Peter is surely a statue of Jupiter, with the keys in the place of the thunderbolt. Some of these images of your Christ seem to be our Apollo and Orpheus renamed. This

'Black Virgin,' as you call it, which certain of your people seem to reverence so highly, I am sure, from the inspection that I have made of it, is nothing more nor less than one of our old basalt figures of Isis. We did not have such boxes as these which you call 'Confessionals'; and from what you tell me of their uses I am very glad we did not have them; but we had a better form of confession: a public acknowledgment of wrong-doing in the temples—a most salutary observance which kings were known to be manly enough to use."

While waiting for the chief event of the day we rested ourselves in some of the stiff-back chairs of the great church. Groups of monks and nuns caught Pagan's eye, and on being informed concerning them he observed: "A very old institution this of Monasticism. Buddhism had most fully developed it. In one city alone there were more than one hundred monasteries and ten thousand nuns and novices. Our own Egypt had developed quite extensively the cenobitic form of monasticism. I am not sure but your very word 'nun' is of Eastern origin."

Some casual reference having been made to the rite of exorcism, Pagan asked for further information concerning it. Ecclesiastic showed him a ritual by Paul V., as revised by Benedict XIV., which he proceeded to compare with the Kabalistic ritual that had been familiar to the initiates of Judaism and Paganism; pointing out the singularly close parallelisms which held between the two forms of service, as follows:

Kabalistic ritual for the exorcism of salt:

"Priest-Magician blesses the salt, and says: Creature of salt, in thee may remain the WISDOM (of God); and may it preserve from all corruption our minds and bodies. Through Hochmael (God of Wisdom) and the power of Ruach-Hochmael (the Holy Spirit) may the spirits of matter before it recede.—Amen."

Roman ritual for the exorcism of salt:

"The Priest blesses the salt and says: Creature of salt, I exorcise thee in the name of the living God. Become the health of the soul and of the body! Everywhere where thou art thrown may the unclean spirit be put to fight.—Amen."

At this point our friend's notice was drawn to a shrine of Mary, in which was one of the familiar representations of the sacred Mother and Child. He seemed greatly pleased with this. "The

virgin-mother," he said, "was common to various ancient religions. India had Maya, the virgin-mother of Buddha, and Devaki, the virgin-mother of Christna; each of whom was represented by art in the great temples as holding her divinely born son in her arms, in forms that might well take the place of this Christian Mary. The Egyptian Isis had the same character, and was pictured after the same fashion. She was even represented, as your Mary appears, standing on the crescent moon, with twelve stars about her head. The artistic resemblance is so close that, unless your historians can trace your traditional picture of Mary quite thoroughly, it seems to me quite probable that it was drawn bodily from our Egyptian representation of Isis." In answer to a request for further information concerning the offices of worship addressed to the mother of God, Ecclesiastic showed him the Litany of our Lady of Loretto, between which and the Hindu Litany of our Lady Nari and the Egyptian Litany of Our Lady Isis he proceeded to institute a comparison, some of the more notable features of which are as follows:

HINDU	EGYPTIAN	ROMAN CATHOLIC
Litany of our Lady Nari: Virgin.	Litany of our Lady Isis: Virgin.	Litany of our Lady of Loretto: Virgin.
Holy Nari, Mother of perpetual fecundity.	Holy Isis, universal mother.	Holy Mary, Mother of divine grace.
Mother of an incarnate God.	Mother of Gods.	Mother of God.
Mother of Christna.	Mother of Horus.	Mother of Christ.
Virgin most chaste.	Virgin sacred earth.	Virgin most chaste.
Mirror of Supreme Conscience.	Mirror of Justice and Truth.	Mirror of Justice.
Queen of Heaven and of the universe.	Queen of Heaven and of the universe.	Queen of Heaven.

A little assemblage at the baptistery attracted our friend's notice, and he wandered thither; Ecclesiastic duly discoursing of the supernatural origin and mystic powers of this sacred rite. Pagan watched the ceremony with great interest, and when it was over remarked: "Baptism is one of the oldest rites of religion, and was observed in ancient times by most nations in their mysteries. From the very earliest period known to history, water was used as the outward and visible form of a religious sacrament, the symbol of a spiritual regeneration. Candidates for initiation into the higher life were plunged in consecrated water at the hands of the officiating priests. In

India, under certain forms of Brahmanism, there was such an initiatory rite. An oath was made by the would-be initiate, pledging him amongst other things to purity of body. Water was then sprinkled over him; he was invested in a white robe; a cross was marked on his forehead and he was given the mystic word A U M. Sometimes this Brahmanistic baptism was performed by the bank of a sacred river, into which the priest plunged the candidate three times; praying over him, 'O Supreme Lord, this man is impure like the mud of this stream; but as water cleanses him from this dirt, do Thou free him from his sin.' Buddhism, in some of its forms, had a similar ceremony. The new-born babe was dipped in sacred water three times and a name given to it. The ancient Persian carried his babe to the temple shortly after its birth, and presented it to the priest, who baptized it after a similar fashion; the father then giving the child its name. The Mithraic Mysteries had such a service for adults, in which the foreheads of the initiates were signed with the sacred sign—the cross. Our own Egyptians had the same rite of baptism, and the Myste-

ries of Isis thus received the initiate. This rite was known as the 'water of ablution'; and the person mystically purified was said to be 'regenerated.' Our devout churchmen, in ancient times, developed the same sacramentarianism which I recognize in the words of my friend Ecclesiastic. This holy rite was held to have a mystic power independent of the state of mind of the initiate; a superstitious opinion which a certain Greek historian sneeringly rebuked thus: 'Poor wretch, do you not see that, since these sprinklings cannot repair your grammatical errors, they cannot repair the faults of your life.'"

To all which Broad Churchman responded: "What you say was confirmed by so sound an ecclesiastical authority, in the vanguard of scholars, as our own Dr. Lundy, who, in his great work on Monumental Christianity, remarks, 'John the Baptist simply adopted and practiced the universal custom of sacred bathing for the remission of sins. Christ sanctioned it; the Church inherited it from his example.'"

Turning away from the baptistery, Pagan proceeded to descant upon the sacred sign of the cross,

which he had observed in use in the baptismal office and which he had noticed everywhere in the sacred building. "If you have learned archæologists and numismatists, they must have told you that the cross was a universal and world-old religious symbol, and that it was used in most, if not all, of the ancient sacred mysteries. Hindus, Assyrians, Egyptians, and Romans alike employed this sacred sign. A cross hung upon the breast of Tiglath Pileser in a colossal tablet from Nimroud that was in the Museum of Alexandria. The cross was the symbol of the Hindu god Agni, 'the Light of the World.' It was found in our Egyptian temples, and was worn from necklaces around the throats of our pious ladies, just as I have observed your good women wearing it here to-day. One of its common forms which I observed here, the cross and orb, is an exact reproduction of a familiar Egyptian symbol, the mystic Tau. The origin and significance of this singular symbol was much discussed in our times. By many it was held to have been originally a Phallic sign, which in the gradual spiritualizing of religion came to stand for the mystery of life spiritual

rather than life physical, for regeneration rather than generation. Our occultists and mystics had various subtle and ingenious explanations of the higher significances of the sacred cross, which I dare say your learned men still reproduce." Whereupon Broad Churchman interposed again: "This fact of the antiquity of the cross as a religious symbol is clearly recognized by our modern scholars. Bishop Colenso, in the 'Pentateuch Examined,' writes thus:

> From the dawn of organized Paganism in the Eastern world to the final establishment of Christianity in the West, the cross was undoubtedly one of the commonest and most sacred of symbolical monuments. . . . Of the several varieties of the cross still in vogue . . . there is not one amongst them the existence of which may not be traced to the remotest antiquity. They were the common property of the Eastern nations.

And if his opinion be that of a theological 'suspect,' it is amply buttressed by more orthodox authorities. 'Chambers's Encyclopedia' declared: 'It appears that the sign of the cross was in use as an emblem, having certain religious and mystic

meanings attached to it, long before the Christian era.' Our own most orthodox presbyter, Dr. Lundy, confesses: 'We actually find among all the ancient nations that had astronomical systems . . . the cross as one of their most cherished and precious symbols.' "

What more Broad Churchman might have proceeded to say was cut short at this point by the entrance of the ecclesiastical procession, the hour for High Mass on this great day of the year having arrived. Pagan was quite impressed by the scenic beauty of the pageant, and complimented Ecclesiastic greatly on the artistic perfection which had been reached by the "floor-manager"—his terms became a little mixed at this point and on the admirableness of the "properties" generally. The pageant was so much like his familiar ecclesiastic *mise en scène* that he almost felt himself transported back to some great Isis Day at Thebes. Turning to Broad Churchman, he asked him if he did not remember the eloquent description of the priestly procession on an Isis Day given by Apuleius; or Juvenal's description of the sacred image, "escorted by the tonsured, surpliced train."

Broad Churchman, nodding assent, went on to give the Ancient a free rendering of Dean Stanley's account of the historic origin of the ecclesiastical vestments which appeared in the priestly parade; tracing surplice and alb and chasuble and cope and all their kindred regalia to the one-time common dress of the Roman citizen, which, as it became antiquated, grew sacred. Pagan smiled in quiet approval, remarking: "The good Dean was doubtless right; but much of this ecclesiastical regalia has a far more ancient origin. Your bishop's mitre and crosier were once the high cap and hooked staff of one of our gods. The tiara of your Pope—who, by the way, bears himself superbly in this sacred pageant—is a perfect copy of that of the Dalaï-Lama of Thibet. Your Pope himself," he observed, turning to Ecclesiastic, "is our old Pontifex Maximus; who, in his turn, was a Western reproduction, greatly modified, of the Grand Lama, the infallible Head of the True Church."

The office of the Mass interested Pagan greatly, and from time to time he interjected in respectful whisper his comments on the proceedings. "The

Thibetan Buddhists and the Chinese Buddhists used musical bells in their sacred services, very much as you are doing here. . . . Most of the ancient temple services saw these same censers, swinging clouds of aromatic incense before our altars. . . . Your altar, too, stood in our temples, though sometimes we called it the 'table.'" At the conclusion of the office, Pagan talked at considerable length upon the ancient sacred rite to which the Christian Mass, he said, bore so remarkable a resemblance. "I could almost again fancy myself back at our ancient Mysteries. Altar and chalice and paten, sacred bread and wine, the sacramental feast—all these we initiates knew quite as well as you know them. In India the primitive Vedic religion had its sacred Soma, which made a new man of the initiate; from which he was reborn; which gave the divine power of inspiration and developed a spiritual nature. By this sacrament man obtained union with his divinity. Thibet had a sacrament of bread and wine. Our own Egyptians, in celebrating the resurrection of Osiris, commemorated his death by a sacred meal; eating a wafer after it had been

consecrated by the priest and had become the veritable flesh of his flesh. This bread was regarded as the body of Osiris, so that our worshipers believed that they ate their God. Mithraism had also its eucharist, with ceremonies quite similar to your Christian mysteries. This resemblance even extended to such a minute feature as your round wafer; which in the Mithraic Mysteries was an emblem of the solar disc or Mizd—a possible hint of the etymological key to your term Missa. When the worship of Mithra was introduced into Rome, this sacrament of bread and wine was celebrated in the world's metropolis. The Greeks also had their Mysteries, in which there was a sacramental supper, the most august of all their ceremonies, wherein Ceres, the goddess of corn, gave men her flesh to eat, as Bacchus, the god of wine, gave them his blood to drink. The consecrated cup was handed round, just as was done here this morning among your clergy. We had even the same sacramentalism which Ecclesiastic evidently cherishes, as I saw by his attitude during your Mass. Do you not remember how Cicero exclaims in one place:

'Can a man be so stupid as to imagine that which he eats to be a god?' "

Observing the uneasiness of Ecclesiastic, Broad Churchman interposed at this point saying, "This is a delicate subject for our priestly friend. He would much rather that you should have observed the judicious silence of the scholarly presbyter who wrote 'Monumental Christianity'—in all other matters so entirely frank, but here so prudently reticent. But if he slides quickly over this thin ice, others seem less careful. Of course so unsound a writer as Renan does not weigh heavily, although he does refer in his 'Hibbert Lectures,' delivered under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, to the fact that Mithraicism 'had a eucharist—a supper so like the Christian Mysteries.' But Ecclesiastic may perhaps even now recall the dreadful page of the learned Mosheim in whose utterly sound opinions we were both so well schooled in our *alma mater* of Theology, but who for once forgot that silence is golden. 'The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman Mysteries, and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, induced the Christians of the second

century to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it upon an equal footing in point of dignity with that of the Pagans. For this purpose they gave the name of Mysteries to the institutions of the Gospels, and decorated particularly the "Holy Sacrament" with that title; they used the very terms employed in the Heathen Mysteries, and adopted some of the rites and ceremonies of which those renowned mysteries consisted.' "

At the conclusion of the Mass, as our little company left the church, Ecclesiastic—who it must be confessed had from time to time turned away his ears in holy horror when Pagan had been talking thus sacrilegiously, a horror that seemed intensified when his own brother churchman stooped to act the part of "chorus" to this blasphemous monologue—felt moved to improve the opportunity and speak a word in season to the poor benighted heathen, which might perhaps convert him so far as to make him anxious to avail himself of the rites of the One True Catholic and Infallible Church, while he was out for an airing from Tartarus. The notes of this eloquent dissertation upon the unique character of the

Catholic Church, the miraculous origin of its rites, the supernatural powers of its priesthood, the efficacy of its sacraments as the one means of entering upon eternal life, and the infallibility of its oracles, were unfortunately lost; but they can easily be reproduced from the pages of well-known ecclesiastical writers, or heard repeated in most of our cathedrals. At the end of this unctuous harangue, which had gradually risen into the orthodox orotund, Pagan quietly asked: "If all this be so, what do you make of this remarkable resemblance, to say the least, between your ecclesiasticism and our ancient paganism?" Ecclesiastic, being a thorough-going churchman, who, with the true invincibility of faith, however he might strain at a gnat, was always ready to swallow a sound camel, replied unhesitatingly: "Good Abbé Huc's 'Travels in Thibet' should never have been placed on the 'Index.' Your pagan rites were certainly, as he affirmed, the counterfeits of the true articles, palmed off upon mankind by the ingenuity of the devil in order to bewilder men—satanic imitations of the One Divine Institution. The Holy Church ought not to have gone back

upon him in such a fashion. The venerable Fathers, by whom all good churchmen swear, anticipated his courageous utterances. Justin Martyr, in speaking of the Mithraic rites, observed, 'which things indeed the evil spirits have taught to be done out of mimicry.' Tertullian, with the same boldness of faith, declared: 'The devil, whose business is to pervert the truth, mimics the exact circumstances of the divine sacraments in the mysteries of idols. Let us acknowledge the craft of the devil. There is no other way of defending the claims of the Church in the face of these facts.'" Whereupon Pagan, shrugging his shoulders, smiled and quietly observed, "So much the worse for the Catholic Church. It is not usual for parents to borrow the goods of their unborn children. If the devil thus imitated the rites of the One True Church, he must have had a most singular prescience to have been able to anticipate their exact form, centuries before the True Church arose. The fact is plain," he continued, "that your Catholic Church shares the sacred 'properties' of religion which were common to all lands and all ages. These rites were indubitably in existence long

before Christianity was born. The only natural explanation is, that Christianity adopted them from Paganism. The Church may have found it impossible to dispossess these traditionary usages and forms"—"As some of the Fathers confess," put in Broad Churchman—"or she may have found in them fitting symbols of her own truths; but, whatever be the interpretation of the fact, a fact unquestionably it is, that ecclesiastical Christianity is our old Paganism re-baptized." He turned for confirmation of his views to Broad Churchman, appealing to him if this was not the recognized view of scholars even in the Church? Broad Churchman frankly rejoined that this was undoubtedly the judgment of dispassionate Christian scholars. "As an Egyptian," he observed, "you will be gratified to learn what Mr. King, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, declares in his work on 'The Gnostics':

There is very good reason to believe that as in the East the worship of Serapis was at first combined with Christianity, and gradually merged into it with an entire change of name, not substance, carrying with it many of its ancient notions and rites; so in the

West a similar influence was exerted by the Mithraic religion.

Our friend Ecclesiastic would not question the authority of such a scholar as Baronius, yet he writes:

It is permitted to the Church to use, for the purpose of piety, the ceremonies which the Pagans used for the purpose of impiety, in a superstitious religion, after having first expiated them by consecration, to the end that the devil might receive a greater affront from employing, in honor of Jesus Christ, that which his enemy had destined for his own service.

The learned Mosheim, after the words already quoted, went on to say,

This imitation began in the eastern provinces, but, after the time of Adrian, who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins, it was followed by the Christians who dwelt in the western part of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the Church in this—the second—century, had a certain air of the Heathen Mysteries, and resembled them considerably in many particulars.

Our own Dr. Lundy's great book rests upon the fact of the Pagan source of our Christian sym-

bolism. The very highest authority on the subject of Christian symbols testified: 'Their origin, without doubt, must be traced to Paganism.'"

On hearing a churchman apparently thus give away his own case, Philistine, who had been in a state of highest delight for the last hour or two, could no longer restrain himself; and with a face beaming with satisfaction, he recited a favorite sentence from Renan as follows: "Almost all our superstitions are the remains of a religion anterior to Christianity, and which Christianity has not been able entirely to root out." Whereupon, he proceeded to launch forth in one of those profound invectives against Christianity which, in the early years of his education, he had heard served up both hot and cold at the hands of the *ir*Rev. Dr. Ingot-soll, when conducting the worship on Sunday evenings at Booth's Theatre—tickets 50 cents; reserved seats, $1. He denounced Christianity as a fraud of the priesthood, and excoriated the Church as a poor imitation of Paganism. He talked positively about the absolute unhistoricalness of Jesus, and discoursed learnedly as to the Christian Sun-myth; interlarding his

dissertation copiously with the opinions of Higgins and Inman and other scholars renowned for their good judgment and lack of prejudice. He waxed wrothful over the folly of attending the services of such a Church, and grew eloquent on the duty of emancipating one's self from its childish superstitions, and of living up to the brand-new gospel of three square meals a day and a "go-as-you-please" walk over the course of life. As he closed, quite out of breath with his own vehemence, he turned to Pagan, confident of his approving smile.

To his unbounded surprise, however, he found the cultivated and philosophic ancient far from smiling at this outburst. A frown was on his classic features and a tone of stately indignation was in his voice as he proceeded to reply. "However widely I differ from our superstitious friend, Ecclesiastic, I differ yet more widely from you, my irreverent Philistine. The historic nature of these Christian symbols makes irresistibly against the false claims of Ecclesiasticism, undermining completely its foundation and rendering its gorgeous superstructure wholly unsafe; but this historic nature of the Christian symbols in no

sense invalidates the true claims of a reasonable and historic Christianity. If antiquarians have given you moderns the real family tree of your religious institutionalism, the pretentiousness of the priesthood may be subdued to a lower key—it is vain to hope that it will be hushed to silence; but the honest pride of the Christian religion will be vindicated, in a far more venerable ancestry than it had suspected, and a legitimacy will be evidenced, as the sovereign of the soul, which history itself attests and which the plebiscite of humanity endorses.

"Your talk, friend Philistine, seems to me thoroughly irrational. Granting ecclesiastical Christianity to be a re-baptized Paganism, there is in this nothing necessarily to its discredit. It is old, you say. How could it be new, if it be in any respect true? It is indeed a reproduction of ancient forms. What else could it be, if it is a historic development of humanity? In that it lacks originality in its symbolism, it proves itself the heir of the ages. Must not religion be an evolution, as man is himself an evolution? Must not the latest form of religion grow naturally out of

the earlier forms, absorb their characteristics and reproduce their symbolism in new phases? Must it not have grown with the growth of man and carry upon it still in maturity the relics of its childhood days? You might well reject Christianity utterly if its outward forms did not betray its ancestry in the religions of the past. The strongest claim for Christianity is that it is more than Christian, that it is human. In that you can trace its roots back into the most ancient forms of Paganism, you may assure the scientific spirit of your age that it is a veritable historic evolution, a natural selection in the sphere of religion, the survival of the fittest, the highest expression of the spiritual nature which man has as yet been able to reach. The very antiquity of these rites which we have seen in this Christian Church bespeak for them therefore, from the historic mind and the spiritual sense, a new and deeper reverence. As your peasants have worshiped to-day, so the people of our earth have worshiped through centuries and millenniums. There is not a superstitious rite but that loses, in the mind of the devout man, its mere superstitiousness as he beholds it

glorified by the hallowed associations of ages, the tender memories of generations upon generations, who, through these outward and visible signs, have reached forth into the mystery of the all-encompassing darkness, feeling after God if haply they might find Him.

"You moderns need not be over-fastidious as to the crude origin of your rites. In what else but crude, coarse, material conceptions could religious symbolism arise? No one need give up any sacred symbol which he has heretofore used because he learns even its revolting Phallic origin. Not what the symbol meant to him who first devised it, but what it means to him who now uses it—that is its true significance. It must have been the physical phenomena of life which first arrested the attention of man and drew his wonder and his worship. The physical forms of life hold a deeper mystery, which was sure to grow on his mind as he grew able to read them spiritually. Physical phenomena, under the universal law of correspondence, came to shadow realities of the spirit sphere. Cosmic forces and laws transmuted themselves into ethical forces and laws. This

spiritual significance, lying always latent in the core of those world-old Phallic symbols, coming out into light as man's consciousness has grown more spiritual—this must be the true meaning of these gross primitive imaginations. Even in our ancient Paganism this process of spiritualizing went on everywhere, with the ethical growth of nations. Whatever the cross was originally, it became in the higher life of antiquity a symbol of the mystery of life spiritual and eternal, of the sacrifice through which the Divine Power is blessing man, in nature and in history, a symbol of the very truth which your Christianity sees in it to-day. Those world-wide, world-old symbols, from the least up to the greatest, have always thus signed real truths. Baptism was a natural symbol of a spiritual purification, and it is such still—an inevitable rite, if religion is to be symbolical at all. A Holy Supper in which the human shall feed upon the divine life, this too is as natural as nature. Do not your *savants* tell you that which our sages saw, that there is a great order of plants which, carrying the sign of the cross enstamped by nature upon their forms, might well

be named *Cruciferæ*. Were I a Christian I should claim that Christianity was 'a republication of natural religion.' Nor in claiming this would I disclaim its legitimate historical character. Since nature is one, the sign in which our ancient mysteries traced the deepest mystery of nature ought to hold valid for the deepest mysteries of human life, if man be nature's crown and consummation, and the cosmic symbol should prove a historic symbol in the religion which is at once natural and ethical. All the great Saviours of humanity have brought salvation to man in the sign of sacrifice. They have given themselves for men. I recall how Plato dreamed that the god who was to appear at some time, the Word which would be heard speaking clearly to the soul, would be fashioned 'decussated in the form of the letter X.' It is natural to my mind that the latest and highest teacher, the greatest Saviour, should have ended his self-sacrificing life upon a cross, and that the cosmic and human truths should thus blend; that the ideal and the historic cross, becoming one, should become the sacred sign of Christianity. The most striking feature of Christian religion,

historically viewed, is the fact that it has gradually clarified its early rites, spiritualized its material symbols, purified and ennobled its ideas, and re-baptized Paganism into a new life—whose ethical contrast with our ancient habits you cannot half so well realize as I do.

"When I was in Egypt I worshiped the gods under the highest conceptions vouchsafed to me, through the noblest forms open to me. So I do to-day, reasonably and reverently; and in so doing, were I to tarry on earth, I should be a Christian. But in being a Christian I should feel that I was only a developed Pagan. We who were admitted as initiates into the secrets of that esoteric religion which was guarded from the profanation of unripe ages in the Greater Mysteries, knew, centuries and millenniums ago, the central articles of all forms of faith; which were revealed to him who had eyes to see in our sacred symbols, and which are to-day taught openly to your riper age. The unity of God, the life to come, the rewards and punishments of the future, the purification of the soul from sin through suffering—these are the articles of the one true creed

of the one inner religion of all lands and ages; which will live while man lives, facing the same physical nature around him and the same spiritual nature within him. All great religious symbols are universal. There is no monopoly of sacred symbolism. Such a scene as that which we have beheld to-day is, when read in the light of history, the highest possible lesson of charity."

As Pagan closed, Broad Churchman's voice was heard as though soliloquizing: "Is not this that which our own honest-souled scholar declares in summing his great work on 'Monumental Christianity'—'Religion is essentially one in faith and practice, under various modifications, perversions, corruptions and developments'; and has 'had its origin in the human mind and soul, as deriving all their thought, hope and aspiration from some common source of mind and soul'? Was not this the truth which one of the venerable Fathers of the Church taught when he spoke of the Christian religion as having existed before Christ, only under other names? Was not this the truth that another eminent Father inculcated in his famous words: 'There exists not a people, whether Greek

or barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell under tents, or wander about in crowded wagons, among whom prayers are not offered up in the name of a Crucified Saviour to the Father and Creator of all things'?" And then, in sweet and solemn tones, the music of the thought imparting its rhythm to his utterance, he recited a passage from "The Perfect Way":

It (the Cross) was traced on the forehead of the neophyte with water or oil, as now in Catholic Baptism and Confirmation; it was broidered on the sacred vestments, and carried in the hand of the officiating hierophant, as may be seen in all the Egyptian religious tablets. This symbolism has been adopted by and incorporated into the Christian theosophy, not, however, through a tradition merely imitative, but because the Crucifixion is an essential element in the career of Christ. For, as says the Master, expounding the secret of Messiahship, "ought not the Christ to suffer these things, and so enter into his glory?" It is the Tree of Life; the Mystery of the Dual Nature, male and female; the Symbol of Humanity perfected, and of the Apotheosis of Suffering. It is traced by "our Lord the Sun" on the plane of the

heavens; it is represented by the magnetic and diamagnetic forces of the earth; it is seen in the ice-crystal and in the snow-flake; the human form itself is modeled upon its Pattern; and all nature bears throughout her manifold spheres the impress of this sign, at once the prophecy and the instrument of her redemption.

Amid the strains of mystic eloquence, in which the fourfold significance of the perfect way opened on our souls, the deepest thought of Paganism translating itself into Christian speech, we reached our hotel; where Pagan and Ecclesiastic left us to arrange for an interview with the Holy Father, in which the former hoped to interpret to him the esoteric truths of his own religion, while the latter sought to lay upon the dogmata of his hierarchy the burden of his beliefs. We took our way back to New York by the same line which had borne us to Rome; and I found myself at home in time for breakfast.

II

THE CYPHER OF THE CROSS

In 1645 a fast day was duly observed in London, as interpreted by a Doctor of Theology in his sermon on that day, because of "monsters unheard-of theretofore," "now common among us," "pleading for a toleration of all religions and worships." Of this breed are the "monsters" who now-a-days gather in congresses of liberal religion. But alas!—such is the lapse of time, and such the *facilis descensus* of all monstrousness in religion—we to-day not only plead for a toleration of all religions and worships, Christian, Jewish and Ethnic of every variety; we plead for a sympathy between all religions, for the reciprocal recognition of vital truths in each other's religion, for the belief that the complete religious truth is only to be heard when all the voices of the soul blend their living affirmations in the

chorded convictions of the spirit, for the furtherance of that unity which is the swelling out of intellectual differences into the full-breathed harmony of spiritual aspirations and intuitions.

Our age makes certain the unity of the human race. The unity of the human race carries with it the unity of the spiritual nature of man. The unity of the spiritual nature of man holds in it the unity of religion—religion being the expression of the spiritual life of man, as the one human soul fronts the mystery of the one Cosmos.

The puzzle as to the secret of the curious resemblances between religions is being settled now, once for all. Plato has not stolen from Moses, neither has Moses cribbed from Plato; Buddhism has not smuggled into the story of Gautama the tales of Jesus, nor has Christianity woven into its records of Jesus the experiences of Gautama; any more than have the Aztecs borrowed their pyramids from Egypt, or the American Indians their mediums from Greece, or our modern Collectivists their State Socialism from Peru and China.

As the beaver builds its dams, wherever found,

after one architect's plans, so man houses his soul in one and the same order of sacred architecture, whenever and wherever he is found in one and the same stages of human development; varying only as the race varies, whether in India or Greece, Judea or Rome, England or America. This that we have for some time seen concerning the various great religions of civilization, the lamented Brinton has demonstrated as between them all and the religions of primitive peoples.

The differences of religion are the differences between the pine of the Adirondacks and the pine of Long Island—differences of soil and climate. Or, they are the differences between the year-old pine and the pine of a hundred years—differences in the stage of development.

Given a similar environment, with the same age, and one and the same ideas and ideals, intuitions and aspirations, hopes and beliefs, laws and institutions, symbols and cults will appear, in the Hindu and the Egyptian, the Persian and the Greek, the Jew and the Roman, the German and the Frenchman. In a larger sense than St. Vincent had in mind, the test of Catholic truth is—that

which has been held always, everywhere and by all.

Literally taken, of course, there is no such truth. But the studies of our age are making clear the existence of a body of common thoughts and convictions underlying all religions that have become ethical and spiritual, which fairly well fulfills this test of truth. This truly Catholic faith may be read within the differing creeds of the various religions; as has been done by an orthodox presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church, whose learned study of religious archæology issues in a presentation of the similarities of spiritual religion, which groups them all under the Articles of the Apostle's Creed.

If such a body of beliefs there be, common to all religions, these constitute the truly fundamental faiths of the soul.

Sacred symbolism yields perhaps the most suggestive interpretation of this Catholic Faith. The symbols of religion are world-old and world-wide. Triangle and circle, dove and eagle, are in use everywhere. Sacred colors have one and the same significance in Chaldea and India and

Greece, in Russia and Italy and America. The priests of Karnac have told Raphael why he painted the Madonna's robe the color of the sky. The dramatization of religion, which we call sacramental worship, was staged by the shores of the Ganges and the Nile, as well as by the banks of the Thames and the Hudson. The mysteries of ancient cults anticipated the Christian Mass. Baptism is older than the Church. Our Easter Hymn was sung, in a rude first-draft, in the Syrian groves sacred to Adonis.

It might be possible to take a bird's-eye view of this large field, but the perspective would be so vast as to shrink out of sight all those details which alone create a realistic impression on the mind. Let it suffice to review in later chapters a number of characteristically universal symbols, and, in particular, to study here the witness of one device of sacred symbolism to the oneness of spiritual religion. And let that symbol be the one ordinarily assumed to be the most distinctive sign of the religion which is supposed to arrogate to itself an exclusive possession of divine truth—the cross.

The Encyclopædia Britannica[1] observes:

> It is curious that a cruciform device, having divers significations, should have occupied a prominent position among so many sacred and mystic figures and symbols connected with the mythologies of heathen antiquity.

This fact is indeed curious, but it is far more than curious—it is to the thoughtful mind profoundly significant.

About the fact there can be no manner of question. The cross is found in India, in the hands of Brahma and Vishnu. Krishna is represented, in a certain painting, with six hands, three of which hold the cross. Agni, the God of Fire, has had as his symbol, from immemorial antiquity, the cross. The magnificent pagoda of Bindh-Madhu at Benares, was, in its central structure, an immense cross. The celebrated cave-temple at Elephanta is nearly in the form of a Greek cross. In the furthest and most sacred portion of the temple is the Hindu triad, with the *Crux Ansata* placed in one arm. There is, in Central India,

[1] Ninth Edition. The Eleventh Edition gives the same findings, but in the words of a different author.

a region which is now desolate, but which bears traces of an extinct civilization, where are found monoliths resembling the Cornish crosses. To this day, in Northern India, the cross is used to mark the jars of sacred water taken from the Indus and the Ganges.

The Buddhists used this same symbol, habitually, under the name of the Swastika. A certain statue of the seated Buddha shows the cross stamped on his breast and on his hands. Chinese Buddhism had the *Lao-Tseu*, or cross, as one of its most ancient symbols. It is painted upon the walls of their pagodas, and "on the lanterns used to illuminate the most sacred recesses of their temples." In Japan the Fylfot cross was the distinguishing badge of the ancient sect of Taca-Japonicus, or first reforming Buddaka.

Assyrian relics show this symbol to have had a general use in the sacred art of Chaldea, from immemorially ancient days. The custom in mediæval Europe of prefixing the cross to signatures and inscriptions of a sacred character was anticipated in the venerable civilization of the land between the rivers. The sculptures from Khorsabad, and

the ivories from Nimrod show well-nigh every variety in the form of the cross. The cylinders and seals found among the ruins of Babylonia bear this device frequently. Tiglath-Pileser appears, in a well-known tablet, now in the British Museum, with the cross *pattei* hanging from his neck.

In Persia the religious use of the cross was familiar. It appears on an ancient tomb in Susa, to which homage is still paid, as the tomb of Daniel. On some of the ancient monuments near Persepolis, ensigns or banners in the form of the cross are still found. Mithraicism, that curious Persian bastard, which so powerfully disputed the field with the young Christianity, knew the use of this sacred sign in the initiations to its mysteries.

Egypt employed this sign, constantly, in sacred art. An early Christian historian tells us that, in the destruction of Serapium, the famous temple of Serapis, in Alexandris, "there were found, sculptured on the stones, certain characters regarded as sacred, resembling the sign of the cross." Every traveler along the Nile knows the familiar forms of this device upon the ruined

temples. The *Crux Ansata*, the cross with the circle above it, is the inseparable accompaniment of the chief triad of the Egyptian deities, Ra, Amon-Ra and Amon. The cross was worn as an amulet by the people of the Nile valley. On high festivals, the priests and worshipers ate of a cake of flour, honey and milk or oil, stamped with the cross.

Judea appears to have known the use of this universal symbol. The letter Tau was sometimes written in the form of a cross. Tradition declared that the blood of the Paschal Lamb was sprinkled upon the lintels and door posts of the homes of the people, on the eve of the Passover festival, in the form of a Tau, or cross. To this day, this custom is said to be observed by the Jews in Corfu.

According to the Talmud, Jarchi, and Maimodides, when the officiating priest sprinkled the blood of a victim in sacrifice upon the consecrated breads, and hallowed utensils, it was in the form of a cross; and the same sign was traced in consecrated oil upon the heads of the priests when annointed.[1]

The pole on which Moses was said to have lifted

[1] Seymour, "The Cross in Tradition, History, Art," p. 19.

up the brazen serpent, as a means of curing the plague-stricken people in the wilderness, was supposed, traditionally, to have been of this sacred shape—"The sign of salvation"—as the Wisdom of Solomon called it. A feeble remnant of the ancient Samaritans, at Nablous, still sacrifices seven lambs, three times a year, spitted on a cross.

Everyone knows the form of the cross in the art of Greece. Dr. Schliemann found this device on terra cotta discs in the ruins of Troy, in the fourth or last stratum of his excavations; dating, as he supposes, from a period about 2500 years B.C. In the Cypriote collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, you may look upon miniature human figures with arms extended to form this sacred sign, which, in some cases, appears also as a seal upon the breast.

The prehistoric lake-dwellers of Italy, who disappeared long before the Etrurians—themselves preceding Roman civilization—made use of this sacred symbol. The mausoleum of the great Lars Porsenna, whom Macaulay has made the schoolboys' hero, repeated thrice this religious device. The staff of the Roman augers was

sometimes surmounted with this symbol; and the vestal virgins of Rome had it hung around their necks, just as good Catholics hang it to-day.

Mr. Baring-Gould, in his charming "Legend of the Cross," tells us how, in 1850, he unearthed a Gallo-Roman palace near Pau, in the South of France, in which he found, as one of the most constantly repeated devices of its decoration, the cross.

In more modern times, in Europe, we find the mighty Thor of the Scandinavians, always represented with his huge hammer in his hand, really holding this sacred symbol. The hammer was in the shape of the cross.

The Druids laid out their forest temples in the familiar shape of our great cathedrals, clearing a cruciform space in the woods for their worship. In the consecration of their holy oaks, they were made cruciform, by having their branches lopped into the desired shape.

On our own western continent, we find the same wide-spread and ancient use of this sacred symbol. Prescott tells us that, when the Spaniards first landed in Mexico and Central America—"They could not suppress their wonder, as they

beheld the cross, the sacred symbol of their own faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Ana-huac." On certain high festivals, the Mexicans made crosses out of Indian corn mingled with the blood of their sacrificial victim. These were first worshiped and afterwards broken and distributed among the worshipers, who ate them as a symbol of union and brotherhood. Tau crosses of metal were found in common use, as amulets. White marble crosses were discovered on the Island of Sant Ulloa. The Incas reverenced a cross, made out of a simple piece of jasper, which had been bequeathed to them by an earlier people. Upon the side of one of the little hills which skirt Pisca Bay is an immense cross, about one hundred feet high, formed of stone, inlaid in the rock. According to the native priests, with the readiness of all good priests to interpret symbolism usefully, this was miraculously made by an angel to warn Pizarro from his wicked tyranny. It is much to be feared that the angel's warning did not sink deep enough into Pizzaro's heart. In Paraguay, an early traveler saw—"Not only a cross marked on the foreheads of the Abipones,

but, likewise, black crosses woven in the red woolen garments of many." As he notes—"A surprising circumstance that they did this before they were acquainted with the religion of Christ, when the signification and merits of the cross were unknown to them." At the extreme southerly termination of the continent, the Patagonians tattoed this holy sign upon their foreheads, as a custom transmitted from their forefathers. Cave-temples of a cruciform shape are not lacking in South America, as in India. One at Mitla, the city of the moon, was hewn out of the solid rock, 123 feet in length and 25 feet in breadth. Upon the walls, the figure of a perfect maltese cross is carved.

This use of the cross in South America dates far back of the period of the Spanish Discovery—how far no one can tell. The prehistoric peoples who preceded the races found on the soil by the Spaniards used this ancient symbol, as their ruins amply testify. Palenque is supposed to have been founded in the ninth century before the Christian era. One of the principal buildings in that city is a palace or temple, 280 feet long by 180 feet in width and 40 feet in height. At the back of one

of its altars, sculptured on a slab of gypsum, is a cross ten feet high. In Yucatan, the first Roman missionaries wisely tried to preserve some of the hymns of the natives, embodying their ancient tradition. A translation, supposed to be literal, of one of the hymns reads thus:

> At the close of the thirteenth age of the world,
> While the cities of Itza and Tancah still flourish,
> The sign of the Lord of the sky will appear,
> The Light of the Dawn will illumine the land,
> And the cross will be seen by the nations of men.
> A father to you will he be, Itzalanos.
> A brother to you, ye nations of Tancah.
> Receive well the bearded guests who are coming,
> Bringing the sign of the Lord from the daybreak,
> Of the Lord of the sky, so clement yet powerful.

Our North American continent witnesses the same widespread and ancient use of this sacred symbol. In the Mississippi Valley, rich in Indian remains, curiously shaped pieces of metal, at first taken for money, but now supposed to be ornaments or medals, have been discovered marked with the *Crux Ansata*. Near Natchez a medal was dug up, in 1844, bearing a cross. One of the most numerous of the later tribes of our Indians,

in their sacrifices for rain, placed their offerings upon the figure of a cross. This use of the cross on our continent far antedates the period of the red Indian. It is well known that our Indians were preceded by an earlier race, the memory of which had perished from the land when the first white man trod our shores. These predecessors of the Indians had achieved a more advanced civilization than that of their successors. The indications of this are in the curious mounds which still preserve the only relics of this forgotten people. These mound-builders evidently held the cross in homage as a religious symbol. This we know from the fact that some of the relics unearthed from their mounds are stamped with this device. Many of the mounds themselves are of a cruciform shape. One such is found near Marietta, Ohio, and another at Tarleton, Ohio—the latter in the form of a Greek cross. It is supposed that these cruciform mounds are the debris of sacred structures.

"That not a link may be wanting in the chain which binds all nations, Jew, Gentile and Pagan, even the islands between the western and eastern

continents are hallowed by the shadow of the cross." The natives of the Gambier Islands tattooed themselves with this emblem. The discoverers of the Mulgrave Islands were received by natives adorned with necklaces, from which crosses were suspended. In the British Museum there are two colossal statues from Easter Island, bearing the Tau upon their backs.

> Thus [as one student of the history of the cross writes] we have completed the circuit of the globe, and find this holy symbol, with a sacred signification, in ages far apart, and among nations widely separated, and, for the most part, utterly ignorant of each other's existence.

As far as we can see, the cross thus appears to have been a world-old, world-wide sacred symbol.

Were there no light to be shed on this singular fact of a world-old, world-wide use of the sacred symbol which we have supposed peculiar to Christianity, the fact itself would rebuke any sense of exclusiveness in its sacred symbolism, or in the religious life which it expresses; and should bind Christians into a fellowship of feeling with all, of every name and race and color and creed, who

have thus, through this form of art, felt after God, "If haply they might find Him."

How did this sacred symbol come into use? Its origin is lost in the midst of antiquity. Yet we can surmise, with some probability, the secret of the forge in which it was fashioned. The oldest historical use of this symbol now known to us is probably found in the worship of the Hindu Agni, the God of Fire. The discovery of the use of fire and of the secret of making it, as needed, was one of the first steps in civilization. It secured man against the inclemency of the weather, and lifted him above the savagery of eating raw food, while it opened to him the possibilities of all mechanical improvements, and of the arts which rest upon them. It was natural that so fierce a power, turning into such a beneficent friend, should receive the homage of primitive man. Perhaps the first rude method of striking a fire was that which is still used in some portions of the East; in which, by taking two pieces of wood and arranging them in the form of a cross, and then whirling them rapidly together, the desired fire is obtained, through the violent friction

produced. It is this very simple piece of mechanism for the production of fire which gives the form of the symbol that is still marked on the foreheads of the young Buddhists and Brahmins.

When our American Creeks, at their festival of the four winds, formed a cross out of four logs, the ends of which extended toward the cardinal points of the compass, they gave a clew to one natural source of this symbolism, in the mystery of nature's order.

The cross is a pattern which would naturally have suggested itself to primitive man as one of the simplest and most necessary forms in nature. He found it everywhere produced in the combinations of creation. He noted it in the flowers of the field; in which it is so common as to give a name to an order, now known as the *Cruciferæ*, of which there are about eight hundred species recognized by us. In all manner of exquisite variations, he beheld this sign in the crystals of the earth. The oldest of sciences is astronomy; and a study of the skies suggested this from—as ran the ancient Mexican hymn, "the sign of the Lord of the sky." The double star fashions it.

The lines of the equinoctial circle, cutting the Zodiac, form it. The daily meridian, intersecting the equator, describes it. The most ancient Chaldean watchers of the sky would have discerned that which Dante saw, ages after them, in noting the heavenly orbs:

> Those rays described the venerable sign
> That quadrants joining in a circle make.

Bisect a circle twice, and you have this venerable sign that "quadrants joining in a circle make."

The cross is everywhere in nature, to the eye of the thoughtful man.

So omnipresent and inevitable a form must, in the mind of the thoughtful man, have assumed a mystic significance. It must have seemed to him to sign something secret and sacred. To divine this mystic significance we must not merely grope among the historic origins of the symbol, in the lore of the archæologist—we must mount into its meaning in the minds of the seers and saints of every people. "It is the flower, not the root, which reveals the life. By their fruits ye shall know them." The form through which the sav-

ing fire revealed itself thus appeared a manifestation of the God of Light. The design which nature fashioned on every hand, in her loveliest works, the flowers, suggested itself as a sign of creative life. The harmonious adjustment of opposing forces which in the heavens draws this figure, in all the great combinations of the skies, taught men to find in the cross the sign of the order of the universe.

The mystery-loving imagination of man could not then have waited for a modern gnostic to thus interpret this strange symbol:

> It is traced by "Our Lord the Sun" on the plane of the heavens; it is represented by the magnetic and diamagnetic forces of the earth; it is seen in the ice-crystal and in the snowflake; the human form itself is modeled upon its pattern, and all nature bears throughout her manifold spheres the impress of this sign, at once the prophesy and the instrument of her redemption.

In some such way as this, pondering over the everywhere-present secret of nature, the cross came, in the mind of man, to assume the character of a sacred symbol, a sacramental sign of Life.

In the Roman armies, grave offences were often punished by decimation. When the lots were drawn, the names of the soldiers on the roll were marked; those who were fated to death having the Greek Theta drawn against their names, while those who were to live having placed by their names the oldest and simplest form of the cross. The Mexicans called their cross "the Tree of Life."

Life itself holds within itself an inner mystery, a secret of transformation, in which, out of the lower, arises a higher being, and through death comes fuller life.

The cross thus became the symbol of life eternal, rising out of life temporal; the sign of man's victory over physical death, the cypher in which was guarded, for the worthy, the doctrine of immortality.

Life in nature, as primitive man saw, is never overcome of death. The Sun, sinking at the close of day beneath the waters of the western sea, seemed to him to be swallowed up by the monster of the deep. The bright God of Day appeared to die. Darkness overcame the light. But lo! with the morning, the bright God reappeared in

the East. He had conquered the powers of darkness. He had passed through the underworld of shadows. He had come to life again, in his joyful resurrection.

The joyous spring drooped and died. The fierce heats of summer consumed his fresh life. He faded, as the autumn leaves withered and fell to the ground. He perished at the touch of frost, and was buried in the snowy shroud of winter. Through long months he tarried in the cold grave of nature. But lo! he breaks the tomb of winter; he comes forth upon the earth, "in verdure clad"; and all the earth smiles at his presence, while the fields blush into beauty at his touch of love.

These are the oldest myths in which the imagination of the child-man read the parable of his own destiny. Life then was imperishable. In that it is, it will be. It must round its full cycle, through every mood and tense of being. Death is only an episode of life. It is the "finis" which closes one chapter in the tale of being.

The sign of life was thus seen to be the sign of immortality. It held the secret of the future.

Our forefathers, therefore, far back in the misty distances of antiquity, used the cross, the sign of life, to betoken their faith that life would live for evermore. The Rosetta stone, which gave our scholars the clue to the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, employed the figure of the cross with the handle as the picture-equivalent of the Greek word for everlasting life. On the Egyptian tombs we may still see the delineation of Horus, the Saviour-God, raising the dead to life, by touching the mummy with a cross—most commonly the *Crux Ansata*. The ancient inhabitants of Mexico and Central America built their sepulchres cruciform. As already indicated, in Italy, before the Romans occupied the land, there was an earlier people, highly civilized in some respects, the Etruscans; before whom, again, there was a still more primitive race, of whom we know scarcely anything. The remains of these prehistoric people lie buried in the debris of their villages and towns, which now form a part of the soil of the land. How remote this civilization we may judge from the fact that, in some places, we have to dig down twenty-one feet to come upon

the traces of this forgotten folk. When we have unearthed the fragmentary traces of this remote race, we discover that they laid their dead away in mother earth beneath the guardianship of the sacred sign of the cross; expressing thus their trust that life would rise again out of the grave.

When, then, we go, some bright spring morning, to the city of the dead, where the mortal remains of our dear ones rest, and observe, on every hand, graven in the fair marble, or lifting itself in iron above the grassy mound, the sacred sign of the cross, we may ponder the impressive fact, that as we have done, so our fathers have done, through centuries and millenniums before us: placing their dead in God's acre, "in hope of eternal life," whose sacramental symbol was to them, as to us, the sign of the cross.

The cross thus became the symbol of the spiritual life, rising out of life material; the sacred sign of the higher life triumphing over the lower life of man; the cypher in which was preserved the secret of the disciplining pains and sorrows of our earthly life. As far back as we can trace his

story, man knew the painful experience which we know to-day—the higher life struggling to free itself from the chains of the lower nature, the spirit striving with the world, the flesh and the devil,—the evolution of the soul. Far back in his story, man seems to have divined the secret of salvation—the renunciation of the lower life to gain the liberty of the higher life; the mortification of the material appetites and passions, that the spirit might rise from this death; the crucifixion of the old man, which was of the earth, that the new man from heaven might reign within. Ages ago man thus learned the innermost secret of peace amid the sufferings and trial of life; as he found these pangs the means through which the one great evolution was effected, and from the fires of suffering the Son of man rose into the Son of God. And all this deepest wisdom of the soul he bodied in the sacred sign of the cross, the symbol of life purifying itself through pain, the sacrament of the resurrection of the spirit from the death of the material man.

Thus we find in the earliest known religions, the use of the cross in initiating candidates into

the higher life. In India, the man who sought the spiritual life was baptized in the waters of the sacred river. He was plunged into the stream, confessing his sins, as thus signing his cleansing of himself from the defilements of the past; and then, as he came forth, he was clothed with a white robe, and the sign of the cross was drawn upon his forehead, in token of the secret wherein he should conquer. In the Sacred Mysteries of different lands the same use of the cross was made. He who through long probation had fought a good battle and shown himself a worthy soldier of the God of Light and Purity, was received into the inner ranks of the sacramental host of the elect and signed with the cross. The noble hymn of Dean Alford might, with slight verbal changes, have been used in those pagan baptisms, with one and the same spiritual meaning, more or less clearly conceived; as, looking up to his Teacher and Master, the newly baptized was taught.

> In token that thou too shalt tread
> The path he travel'd by,
> Endure the cross, despise the shame,
> And sit thee down on high;

Thus outwardly and visibly
We seal thee for his own;
And may the brow that wears his cross
Hereafter share his crown!

The way of holiness was to the dark-skinned Easterners, as to us, the way of the cross. There was to be a cross lifted in their hearts, as in ours, on which the sacrifice of all the evil in their natures was to be made; on which they were to offer up themselves as living sacrifices, acceptable unto God. To make it perfectly sure that such was indeed the meaning of this ancient pagan use of the cross, we find, among various peoples, our familiar emblem of the cross rising out of the heart —the hieroglyph of goodness.

When Dante was treading the upper skies, amid the glories of Paradise, he saw, in the fifth heaven, the spirits of the martyrs who died fighting for the true faith; the bright constellation of their souls forming a mystic cross, from which there came the music which he thus interpreted:

And as a lute and harp, accordant strung
With many strings, a dulcet tinkling make
To him by whom the notes are not distinguished,

So from the lights that there to me appeared
Upgathered through the cross a melody,
Which rapt me, not distinguishing the hymn.

Well was I 'ware it was of lofty laud,
Because there came to me, "Arise and Conquer!"

The cross thus became the symbol of the life of the elect ones of earth, who rise out of the mass of men; the sacred sign of the saviours of mankind; the cypher in which was written the secret of the life going forth from them in salvation for the sons of earth. The truth which the ordinary man found, as he climbed by the way of the cross toward the stars, was lived fully in the immortals of earth. The men who lifted their fellows to the higher life reached down arms of help from a cross. The saviour of a race was always "despised and rejected," a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The throne of saving love in every land was an altar. One of the sacred volumes of China, the Y-King, speaking of the Holy One, declared: "He alone can offer up to the Lord a sacrifice worthy of him." That sacrifice, as an ancient interpreter wrote, was no other than this: "The

common people sacrifice their lives to gain bread; the philosophers to gain reputation; the nobility to perpetuate their families. The Holy One does not seek himself, but the good of others. He dies to save the world."

He dies to save the world! He cannot save the world except by dying. The world makes sure that he shall save it, by putting him to death. Is not this the story of the man sent from God to Greece? In the "Crito," Socrates represents the Laws, personified, as rebuking him for the thought of trying to avoid death by flight. He had learned the secret of sacrifice, as the law under which alone his saving work could be perfected. The world would have dealt gently with the son of the king of Kapilavastu, the heir of his wealth and power. Shut off from every sight and sound of pain, imprisoned behind walls of roses, chained in garlands of flowers, his youthful life passed in an unending round of pleasure. The great soul, struggling to the birth, cast off at length the bondage of the outer life of joy; and, escaping from the palace, the prince tore from him his royal robes and fled to the jungle—to agonize in spirit with the great

problems of life, to meet the fierce onsets of temptation, to gain at last the perfect victory of peace, and to come forth to India as its teacher and saviour, through the sacrifice which he had offered unto Goodness. According to tradition, the Buddha is reported as saying: "Let all the sins that were committed in this world fall on me, that the world may be delivered." Thus, in the spirit, the gentle Gautama was truly crucified for his people. Hebrew story gives an infinitely pathetic picture of the great emancipator's self-sacrificingness:

> And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, "Ye have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto Jehovah: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold: yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin . . . : and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

It need not, then, surprise us that, with this fact of the inner life of the great souls of earth before them, as the spiritual reality signed in the sacred

symbol of nature, men of all lands have fashioned the form of a crucified saviour. As wrote one of the Fathers of the Church, Justin Martyr, who had been a student of the philosophers of Greece:

> There exists not a people, whether Greek or barbarian, or any other race of men, by whatsoever appellation or manners they may be disguised, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell in tents or wander about in crowded wagons, among whom prayers are not offered up, in the name of a crucified Saviour, to the father and creator of all things.

The bright God of Light, Apollo, appears to have been at times represented by the Greeks as crucified. In the familiar myth Prometheus, the friend and helper of man, who had brought down the life-giving fire from the skies, was crucified on the Caucasus; his arms outstretched and nailed upon the rock. Krishna was thus pictured by the Hindus as crucified, in forms that we still may study in the art of India. In our own South America, the Spanish visitors were surprised to find in the temples a cross, and upon it a bleeding man, with a face bright like that of the sun. The crucifix

itself is to be found among the relics of these ancient religions; a sacred sign of the sacrifice of the Teacher and Friend and Saviour, up to whom, under different names, the people looked as the Revealer of God.

A shallow scepticism finds in this strange fact that which brings the flippant sneer to its lips. Books which illustrate the venerable adage "a little learning is a dangerous thing," write with an air of profundity about the Sixteen Crucified Saviours of the World; as though there were no profound spiritual reality back of this universal symbolism; as though the common belief of different races that men are redeemed from evil by saviours who have undergone a real crucifixion, in the flesh or in the spirit, was but a superstitious dream of human fancy. The sciolists of religion tell us that these Sixteen Crucified Saviours of mankind all resolve themselves at length into one world-old Sun Myth. We may grant at once the fact, already pointed out, that this sacred symbol was drawn primarily from nature itself; that it was found as the mystic sign, in the skies, of the secret through which life ruled in the universe and

led creation ever onward and upward; but, then, we may deny the conclusion drawn from this fact. In the story of the bright God of Day, men did find the drapery of imagination wherewith to clothe the mysterious secret of the soul, the strange spiritual reality that lived in the experience of the great historic Teachers and Redeemers of earth—a reality that is as historic as history. That reality fitly draped itself in the symbolism of nature, and thus became infinitely more impressive, as leading back this mystic secret of man into the mystery of the universal order. Nature itself is a physical parable of spiritual reality; the hieroglyph in matter of the secret of spirit; a picture-story of the life of the Son of God. In a universe where there is a real unity we ought to expect that the physical order should give, in terms of physics, the secret of the spiritual order; that we should find in the heavens the symbol of what is to come forth in man, the flower of nature herself. The law of correspondence insures that we shall find the story of the soul written in picture language in the open pages of nature; that we shall hear, in the whispers of the skies, the rehearsings

of the symphony of the spirit. The heavens are the prophetic chroniclers of the great sons of God, and when these come upon earth they live the life of the cross which was seen in the skies. The secret of the soul must needs be written in the cosmos.

The cross thus became the symbol of the divine life rising through the human life; the sacred sign of the innermost secret in the Infinite and Eternal Being; the cypher in which was cherished the mystery that it is through sacrifice that God himself is redeeming and regenerating man. Nature is a cosmic symbol of the Infinite and Eternal Spirit. The secret which is pictured in the skies, which is traced chemically in the crystals, which blooms in the flowers, which comes forth as a water-mark through every fiber of nature, which is shrined in the soul of man, is a secret of the Divine Being himself. It holds a mystic truth of the essential nature of God. The Infinite and Eternal Life is ever giving itself forth into lower lives. The Generator of life is the Regenerator of life—the power which is always working through creation to lift the lower forms of being higher,

the will which through man is pulsing the energy that redeems him from all evil, the Being who is ever offering himself in every sacrifice which brings salvation unto man. This sacrifice going on in the Divine Being is the reality of which all other sacrifices are but an expression, from which all other lower sacrifices draw their inspiration. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This travail of creation is none other than the travail of God. The Divine Motherhood is bringing to the birth the sons of God. She "shall see of the travail of her soul and be satisfied."

Layard tells us that when a cross stands before a name in Assyrian records it denotes a divine personage. In one of the Egyptian representations of Amon, the God of Life, a cross glitters on his breast. The Hindu Krishna was none other than "the Divine Vichnu himself"; "He who is without beginning, middle or end," "being moved to relieve the earth of her load," and incarnating himself to perform this sacrificial oblation. This is the meaning, probably, of one of the most remarkable representations in the religious art of

antiquity, a Hindu picture of what Dr. Lundy calls "a crucifixion in space"—a divine man poised in the air, with outspread arms, as though upon a cross, the nail-marks in his hands and feet, while the rays of light from the unseen sun surround him with glory. It was the dream in pagan art of the mystery on which Plato was musing, when he spoke of the perfect circle, which was the symbol of God, as being "decussated in the form of the letter X"—that is, signed with the sign of the cross within. It was the vision beheld by the great Unknown of Israel—the form of the Righteous Suffering Servant of Jehovah. It was the open sight of the Christian seer; "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a lamb, as it had been slain."

Concerning this ineffable mystery, all human speech is hushed in awe; and we must fain be content in the silence which falls upon our souls when we behold, as the secret of creation, the Infinite and Eternal Being, in whose life rise the springs of all sacrifice.

The cross was thus the ancient symbol of life, the sacred sign of the fourfold secret of being:

life immortal, rising out of life mortal; life spiritual, rising out of life material; life giving itself, in the supreme sons of earth, for the redemption of men, life flowing forth from the Infinite and Eternal Being, as the exhaustless spring of all sacrifice. The cross was the cypher in which was guarded, for prepared souls, through the ages when the mass of men were not felt to be ready for these mysteries, the doctrines of immortality, of regeneration, of redemption, of God's eternal love.

Christianity, as the child born of the marriage of Judaism and Paganism, must needs have reproduced these ancient truths in fresh and higher forms. No other sign than the cross could then have become the symbol of the religion which, as the latest born of earth, takes up into itself the richest, deepest, truest religions of the past.

The life of Jesus made these venerable faiths the open consciousness of man. He brought immortality to light; attesting, in his own reappearance from the spirit sphere, the existence of a life beyond the grave. The son of Mary

walked our earth as the son of God, filled with the spirit, victor over every temptation, the holy one of the Father. He verily gave himself for us, a sacrifice for our sins. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "He gave his life a ransom for many." In him man saw the face of God unveiled, and knew that "God is love." His whole life was the sign of life—THE CROSS.

Nor this, alone, in any figurative sense. In the eternal fitness of things, it must needs have come about that he should have been lifted up upon a cross. It did so come about. Contrary to the law of the land in which he died, and to the usages of the race to which he belonged, he was crucified. Thought and deed were welded in the death of Jesus; the spiritual reality translated itself into a physical fact; and the mystic man, in whom the sacrificial life of nature, of humanity, of God, was supremely manifest, actually died upon the cross. "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things?"

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin.

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

As the traveler looks down from Gray's Peak upon the grandest view which this continent affords, he beholds on one of the largest mountain peaks the snow lying in the form of an immense cross. "As if," so wrote Mr. Samuel Bowles, "God had set His sign, His seal, His promise there, a beacon upon the very center and height of the continent, to all its people and to all its generations."

From the study of sacred symbolism we may well rise with the greater question: What if God has set His sign upon the universe, has stamped His seal in the very fabric of nature, has woven it in the tissue of the soul of man?

When the Spanish conquerors of Mexico found a certain native cross, which had been reverenced

for ages as a divine symbol, word was sent of its discovery, together with a cup cut from its wood, to the then Pope, Paul V, who received it upon his knees, singing the hymn *Vexilla Regis*. So may we receive the discovery that comes to us from our bird's-eye sweep of the spiritual story of man, as read in one fragment of his sacred symbolism—only with a profounder hush of awe, breaking softly into a song of deeper faith and larger love.

The cross, then, which is supposed to be the distinctive symbol of Christianity—that which in the realm of religious art differentiates Christianity from all other religions—proves to be the common symbol of ethical and spiritual religion, in different lands and different ages. It is the symbol known to Hindu, Chaldean, Egyptian, Persian, Jew, Greek, Etruscan, Roman and Goth, as well as to the natives of Mexico and South America, the red man of North America and his prehistoric ancestors, and the islanders of the Southern seas; in which tabernacles Humanity's deepest intuitions and aspirations, its loftiest ideas and ideals, its most sacred hopes and faiths,

its very heart of love. It is a cryptogram of universal religion, hiding the mystery of the oneness of spiritual thought and life in all lands and ages. It is not a symbol of an exclusive religion, but an inclusive religion.

What is true of the cross is true of all other symbols which have hallowed themselves in the religion of man as fit sacraments of the divine mystery of life, as forms in which man can worthily lift his worship to the Infinite and Eternal Being. The traditional symbolism of Christianity is, throughout, universal and human—expressive of the unity of the spiritual consciousness of man, revealing the one ethical interpretation of the universe which the soul, in men of all colors and races and creeds, when coming to itself, has rendered through all time.

And this, which is true of the symbols of religion, is, with more or less modification, true of its institutions and cults and beliefs. On the same plane of intellectual, ethical and spiritual development, the same institutions appear upon different soils; through the same forms of worship, men of different races feel after God, "if haply they may find

him"; into the same aspirations the soul everywhere strains; toward the same forms of faith the various creeds converge. One is the faith, the hope, the love of man. Religions are many—Religion is one. As said St. Ambrose: "*Vox equidem dissona, sed una religio.*" In the outer vestibule of the temple of the soul we may seem strangers one to another as we lift our worships, in differing forms, to what seem to be different deities. But, when the veil is lifted and we enter the holy place, we know ourselves brothers in blood, and see in each other's faces the light of the same faith and hope and love. It needs but the living touch of the Spirit to make us each hear, in his own tongue, the words of him, of whatever race or creed, who speaks to us the deep things of God. And this means that the breath of the Spirit makes us all kin, one to another. The catholicity of the cross! It is the catholicity of all sacred symbols imaginative and intellectual, the catholicity of spiritual religion.

Why should men of today, then, waste their moral energies and deaden their spiritual lives by dwelling on the mental differences which neces-

sarily separate them, by quarreling over hereditary variations of soul, by mounting guard upon the barriers which isolate one from the other? Why should they covet the petty provincialisms of piety, rather than the cosmopolitanism of character? As runs the Chinese apothegm, "The catholic-minded man regards all religions as embodying the same truths—the narrow-minded man observes only their differences."

It is open to any one to read the story of the cross, as of the other Christian symbols, æsthetic, and intellectual, so as simply to glorify Christianity; finding in it the bloom of Judaism and the flower of Paganism—as indeed should be the latest great religion, growing from the main stem of the human stock, into which the sap of the soul of man must have poured. How great Christianity is can only be discerned in the larger faith which Liberalism teaches men to find in their old creeds and symbols. It is the largeness of Humanity itself.

For such glorification of Christianity, in so far as it is rational, is, after all, only a glorification of the soul of man, native under the skin of Hindu and Egyptian, Jew and Greek and Christian. It

is the spiritual nature of man which, fronting a spiritual Cosmos, has everywhere thus read the cosmic cypher as a secret of the soul, and shrined in this sacred symbol the mystic meaning of life. Prophetically did Matthew Tyndal declare, long ago, that Christianity is as old as creation. That can only be in so far as it is something larger than Christianity—in so far as it is Humanity. After the same fashion did good St. Augustine write, in the words too often used polemically, and so falsely: "What is now called the Christian religion has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian." "They builded wiser than they knew." Essential Christianity is essential Judaism, essential Buddhism, essential Hinduism —the one spiritual religion of man. The Christ ideal is the human ideal. Whatever the wasp of Twickenham meant, his words were larger far than he dreamed: "The Christian is the highest style of man." The true Christian is simply man in his latest spiritual development. And so the

term "Christian" is rapidly coming into use as synonymous with the latest and, therefore, presumably the highest evolution of the one spiritual nature of humanity. Professor Herron declared in one of his prophetic lectures: "By the term 'Christian' I mean that quality of conscience and sympathy which suffers not a man to rest short of some altar, however rude, on which he offers his life in the common service, the social good."

So, then, with the Persian it may be said: "I am at home in mosque or synagogue, in temple or in church."

William Ellery Channing tells how, when he had sought out all the noble teachers, Lao-Tszee and Kung-Fu-Tszee, with Zoroaster and Buddha, Plato and Epictetus, " hand in hand they brought me up to the white marble steps, and the crystal baptismal fount, and the bread-and-wine crowned communion table—aye! to the cross in the chancel of the Christian Temple; and as they laid their hands in benediction on my head they whispered, 'Here is your real home.' "

This one universal spiritual religion of man—must it not be the truth of the universe? What

certitude such a study of sacred symbolism gives to the interpretation of the cosmos which has been thus rendered everywhere by the soul of man! What authority of creed or council, of patriarch or pope, can equal this authority of the universal soul? It is the authority of the one sovereign pontiff—Humanity.

George Eliot once said:

> I think we must not take every great physicist or other "ist" for an apostle, but be ready to suspect him of some crudity concerning relations that lie outside his special studies, if his exposition strands us on results that seem to stultify the most ardent, massive experiences of mankind, and hem up the best part of our feelings in stagnation.

How a light and shallow scepticism should shrink into silence before this world-old, world-wide unity in the spiritual interpretation of the universe! Its silly sneers die out on the lips of the man who seriously faces the fact of such a cosmic creed.

Such authority of "man writ large" must needs be the authority of the Grand Man, in Swedenborg's noble phrase—long antedating Comte—

by which Swedenborg meant more than the human race, even the reality back of and within man, back of and within the cosmos; the Infinite and Eternal Energy out of which we all proceed, the Being "in whom we live and move and have our being"—God. If there be any revelation of God, is it not here, in "these massive and ardent spiritual experiences of man," through which the human soul interprets the mystery of the universe? Shall we not trust this body of belief utterly?

Shall we not trust it, not alone for our individual peace, but for our social salvation?

The secret of society—can it be other than the secret of the soul, the cypher of the cosmos? How shall we bring order out of our social chaos, peace out of our economic strife, the millennium of prosperity for all out of the civilization of favored classes, resting on the enforced barbarism of the masses? Let political economy toil with this problem, as it needs must toil. Its help is sorely needed, for wiser legislation and a saner industry and trade. But the secret of the problem lies in the secret of the cosmos, of which a true political economy will be found only a provincial law, the

law of a part of the infinite empire; and that secret, as the soul everywhere reads it, is the cross. "There is," as George Sand said, "but one real virtue in the world—the eternal sacrifice of self." The secret of social salvation will be found when wealth and culture shall accept the Cross as the law of life, and consecrate all powers and possessions and privileges to the service of man.

The suffering world cries, in the eloquent appeal of Victor Hugo, to every fortunate and privileged man—

> Sacrifice to the mob! Sacrifice to that unfortunate, disinherited, vanquished, vagabond, shocking, famished, repudiated, despairing mob. Sacrifice to it, if it must be, and when it must be, thy repose, thy fortune, thy joy, thy country, thy liberty, thy life. . . . Sacrifice to it thy gold, and thy blood, which is more than thy gold; and thy thought, which is more than thy blood; and thy love, which is more than thy thought. Sacrifice everything to it—everything except justice.

Truly, as Shelley once wrote, "What a divine religion there might be if love were the principle of it, instead of belief."

In the brotherhood of liberals, in which men, of whatever name, who have outgrown the insularities of religion and entered upon the cosmopolitanism of character, the catholicity of the soul, dare call themselves "the free men of the spirit," may the way be seen to leave behind all the polemics of religious partisanship, and aspire after the one spiritual religion of humanity, the faith and the life of the Cross. Be it theirs so to free the different religions from their swathing bands that they may know the power of individual redemption and of social salvation held by all alike in their common symbol, and may teach men to live the life of the Cross—that *Via Crucis*, which is forever *Via Lucis*.

III

THE WITNESS OF SACRED SYMBOLISM TO THE UNITY OF RELIGION

THE naked truth is a rather cold and cheerless thing. To touch our hearts, it must glow with warmth. That it may be warm, it must clothe itself. Religious truth thus clothes itself in institutions, in dogmas, and in symbols. The symbols of the Christian religion are about us in every church. Each church itself is such a symbol.

What is a symbol? It is an idea appealing not so much to the reason as to the imagination; a truth clothing itself, not in the terms of a proposition, but in a picture. A symbol is something which stands for something else; which represents it or presents it again in another form more easily realized. It is a material image of something immaterial. It is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." Because man

is heart as well as mind, imagination as well as intellect, religious truth must always appeal to the heart and the imagination, awakening feeling, kindling intuition. The imagination holds a profoundly important place in religion. We dwell amidst infinite and eternal mysteries, transcending all clear, cold thought, outreaching the halting steps of logic. What we cannot understand, we must needs try to imagine—that is, to image it in our minds, and, to this end, image it before our eyes. So art takes orders in the service of religion and helps us poor mortals apprehend that by which we are also apprehended—the Infinite and Eternal Power in which "we live and move and have our being."

Nature itself is symbolic, sacramental. Each thing is like unto some other thing. The great Master teaches us that the kingdom of Heaven is "like unto"—almost everything. Nature is a vast hierarchy of lives, each successive stage of which is an adumbration or shadowing forth of that life which is higher than itself. Matter images mind, flesh symbolizes spirit, nature is the sacrament of the living God. Everything is

a visible picture of a thought. All things seen are symbols of things unseen.

It is by a natural and necessary instinct, therefore, that religion consecrates art to her service, and calls upon her, as her handmaiden, to interpret to the imagination of men those mysteries which she cannot reveal adequately to their intellect. Religion, therefore, has always evolved its sacred symbolisms. Christianity has its own rich treasures of symbolism—treasures worthy of the great mysteries which it enshrines for posterity. If Christianity be a Catholic religion, capable of developing into a truly universal religion, its symbolism must be Catholic, Universal—large as man himself. The symbols which the coming man is to reverently use in his worship, must be the heritage of man from the far past. They must be the growth of humanity, for humanity.

The sacred symbols of our Christian religion do thus disclose themselves to be the outworkings of an immemorial antiquity, the jealously-guarded treasures of man in many lands and many ages of the far past.

Primitive Christianity had no sacred art, no

religious symbols. It inherited from its mother, Judaism, a distrust of art in religion. The deep human craving, however, was not long in asserting itself. Man began to crave some visible sign or symbol of his faith and hope. The art instinct, latent in human nature, sought expression. We can trace the beginnings of Christian art in the Catacombs—those subterranean places of refuge which were the resort of the early Christians; at once the same meeting places for these new confraternities, which were under the ban of the Empire, and their places for burial. Over these rock hewn vaults, the first rude tracings of Christian art appear. The very earliest Christian symbol apparently was the pictured form of the Good Shepherd. That exquisite sketch of the Master appealed with irresistible power to the imagination of the early Christians. No other picture which he drew left such an indelible trace upon the hearts of his followers in those first days. The popular religion of the first two centuries might well be called the Religion of the Good Shepherd. The book which corresponded most closely to our own "Pilgrim's Progress"—the

most popular religious book of the modern world —was the "Shepherd of Hermas"; which, in the second century, was known and cherished throughout the Roman Empire; the most widely read book of the times; the sacred writing then deemed to be part of the Holy Canon and one of its choicest gems—though it has dropped out from between the lids of our Bible and has passed forth from the memory of the Church. "The kindness, the courage, the grace, the love, the beauty, of the Good Shepherd was to them, if we may so say, prayer book and articles, creed and canons, all in one." They looked on that figure, and it conveyed to them all they wanted. When these early Christians came to picture their Good Shepherd, they found no suitable form ready at hand in art; and so, with the fearlessness of that free age, bound by no superstitious traditions, in no jealous fear of the larger human life round about the new Church, they turned to the art of Greece, and made use of forms which they found therein, conspicuously, the Hermes Kriophorus. The Good Shepherd, as we see Him in these Catacombs, is in the bloom of youth, with a crook or a shepherd's

staff in one hand, and on his shoulder a lamb, which he carefully carries and holds with the other hand. A figure not unlike this Good Shepherd can be traced through different forms of Grecian worship.

Sometimes the Good Shepherd of the Catacombs is in the dancing attitude familiar to us from innumerable pictures of Grecian shepherds. At other times, the form of Apollo is consecrated to a higher use. Orpheus, charming the animals with his sweet music, does duty for the Christ, the sweet strains of whose Evangel so charmed their hearts. One notable fresco is a purely Grecian picture of Orpheus, surrounded by panels giving various scriptural scenes. Far back of Greece, India had its conception which was the prototype of the Christians' Good Shepherd—Krishna, charming the beasts with his lute. So universal is that thought which the Jewish poet sang, in strains so familiar to us all—"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd"; the antiphon in antiquity of the forever sacred song of the Divine Man—"I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Of the symbols still in use among us in our Christianity, nearly all betray their ancient human lineage. I remember, as a boy, in old St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia, studying, from the rector's pew in the front of the church, the peculiar railing which surrounded the chancel. It was the familiar square returning within itself, in closer coils. There was something about it that fascinated my child-mind—I could not tell why. I divined the secret years after, when I learned that this familiar ecclesiastical ornament was indeed an ancient symbol handed down from the times of classic Greece; in which it was the conventionalized representation of the famous labyrinth—itself, the symbol of the strange, mysterious, perplexing, baffling life in which we find ourselves.

A symbol which still is used somewhat in Christendom, but which has lost its ancient popularity, is the fish. In early Christian art it was the sacred sign of Jesus Christ himself. Tertullian, one of the Latin Fathers, writes: "We, little fishes, according to our Ixthus, Jesus Christ, are born in water; nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently remaining in water."

St. Augustine pointed out that if we join together the initial letters of the five Greek words which stand for Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Saviour, they will make Ixthus, fish; in which word Christ is mystically understood, because He was able to live in the abyss of this mortality, as in the depth of waters, that is, without sin. This rather crude sort of mystical imagination was very popular in the early Church. When we trace the origin of this symbol, we find it reaching back into pre-Christian times. In the Talmud, the Messiah is called Dag, that is, fish. This, at once, in the minds of Biblical readers, brings to our remembrance the Dagon, the God Fish, of the early historical books. And this connects the Jewish and Christian symbol with one of the oldest mythological stories of Chaldea. According to this tradition, there appeared in ancient times, from the sea bordering upon Babylonia, a strange being whose body was like a fish, but who had, under the fish's head, another head, and with the feet of a man also below the tail; his voice and language were articulate and human. He, it was, who taught men letters, sciences and arts.

Under his instruction, they learned to build cities, to found temples, to compile laws, and to gain the rudiments of scientific knowledge. This Oannes was, in truth, a mythical form of the universal human instinct, under which men rightly attribute to some Heaven-sent Teacher and Saviour their inspiration to higher life. So the simple fish symbol of the Christ links us to the far back pre-historic times and to the most ancient myths of the early human soul, and to the deepest instincts of man's spiritual nature.

From the very beginnings of Christian art the Dove appears—in fresco paintings, sculptures on gravestones or tablets, in Mosaic lamps and glasses—as the symbol of the Divine Spirit. As such, we still cherish it. You will still see it frequently in our churches, painted above the altar. In the stories of the Master, at the moment of the opening of the self-consciousness, as he stood in the Jordan receiving Baptism from John, and there knew Himself to be the Christ of God, a dove descended upon His head. The dove is the symbol of that inspiration which guides the counsels of kings, as well as the utterances of

teachers. To-day, in the coronation of the Kings and Queens of England, a Duke goes before the Sovereign, bearing the sceptre surmounted by a dove. Mohammed, who so strangely blended the charlatan and the prophet, realizing the value of symbolism to his ignorant followers, taught a dove to perch on his shoulder, and there the bird would remain for several hours; the followers of the prophet seeing in the bird a heavenly messenger commissioned to reveal to him the will of the Almighty. The dove again is an ancient human symbol of the inspiring spirit. Conspicuously in India, Egypt and Greece, but among all religions it has been the recognized symbol of the spirit who inspires truth and life. Tracking the symbol back to its origins, we find here, as always, beginnings which we do not care further to explore—as must needs have been the case in the symbol which arose in early days when man himself was only slightly spiritual, was still largely animal. But with the growth of man's spirituality, the symbol took on ever deeper significance in paganism, as in Christianity. Readers of Ruskin will recall that magnificent description in

"The Queen of the Air" of the bird, as "the symbol of the spirit of life," which he concludes by saying:

> And so the Spirit of the Air is put into, and upon this created form; and it becomes, through twenty centuries, the symbol of Divine help, descending, as the Fire, to speak, but as the Dove, to bless.

The Eagle has been another familiar symbol of our ecclesiastical art. It is the conventional form of the Lectern which upholds the Bible. It is the traditional symbol of St. John, the spiritual Apostle, the traditional author of the spiritual Gospel. Not from those predatory and ferocious qualities which have made it the symbol of mighty states has it come thus into use in Christian art, but simply from the recognition that, in its might, it is the typical creature of the air, the king of the birds, as the lion is the king of the beasts. Again, we find this symbolism far antedating Christianity. Among all the Asiatic peoples the eagle was the Child of the Sun, and consecrated to the Sun God.

From the first ages of Christianity, to the present time, the prevailing symbol of our Lord has been

that of the Lamb. It is the accepted sign of the Crucified One. As such, its use is habitually in our churches. Here again, however, as we might expect, since the thing signified is so deep and vital, the very mystery of the Divine Life itself, the symbol of it is as old as religious art, and as widely spread as man himself, upon our globe. The Pagan world, because it was a human world facing the same interior mystery, fronting the same universe with its indwelling law of sacrifice —the Pagan world also had its idea of sacrifice and suffering, as the secret of entering upon eternal life. It, too, had its visions of the Divine Saviour ever coming to redeem man by the sacrifice of Himself. In every religion this vision was had. In every land some great form of a Divine Saviour looms up before men—some one bearing his cross before them, some righteous suffering servant of Jehovah, some good man rejected and persecuted and finally put to a cruel death. And the symbol of this sacrificial salvation was always the Lamb—the type of innocence and purity, which thus, in early days, came to be the sacrificial offering upon the altar, and thus grew grad-

ually into the symbol of the sacrificial life which is the one offering acceptable to God. The Agnus Dei has, from time immemorial, in different religions, been the symbol of the suffering, sacrificing Saviour, through Whom men, in different lands felt that they were to be led unto God.

The Lion is another symbol familiar to all students of Christian art. The lion of the tribe of Judah, the lion who stands for the Evangelist, St. Mark,—this is one of the most familiar figures of ecclesiastical art. It signs or signifies the power and strength and vigor, the masterful and ruling qualities of the divine human life, which gathered in the person of Jesus so supremely. Again, the lion is an immemorially ancient religious symbol. On the religious monuments of nearly all nations we find the lion as a symbol of strength and vigilance—often placed in temples or at their entrances, to signify protection and returning life. An ancient Persian symbol of the Divine Power was a lion with a honey-bee in its mouth—reminding us of Samson's famous riddle. What is the Sphinx that sits on guard near the great Pyramids, to this day, but this same symbol—the animal with

the lion's body and the man's head? Just as, at the entrance of the Basilicas of Italy, you will see the lion stationed, so at the gates of the ancient temples of Egypt you will find them fulfilling the same function in symbolism—acting as the guardians of the sacred places.

The sacred form of the Blessed Mother and the Divine Child, so dear to our Christian hearts, hallowed by immemorial use in our churches, proves also to date from ages far back of Christianity. In the ancient temples of the East, you might have seen almost the same representation. The Egyptian Isis was pictured holding her infant Horus in her arms, after the same fashion. She was even represented as our Christian Mary appears, standing on the crescent moon with twelve stars about her head. Even to the coloring of the figures the symbolism holds through the ages. The conventional blue of our Madonna was the color of the robe of the Egyptian Isis. For blue has, from times immemorial, been the color of the spiritual life. Nor need we wonder at this antiquity of the Sacred Mother and the Divine Child. It grew out of the recognition of

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the intrinsic sacredness of motherhood, of the essential divineness of every new-born child coming into the world. Could the mystery of our human life have a nobler symbol than that which enshrines, for our reverence, the true Mother and the true Child? There was more than this, however, in the ancient symbol. Ancient Pagan religions had their dream of a Divine Teacher and Saviour coming into the world, in the same mysterious manner as our own Christ. The instinct which has led to the vision of the birth of Christ, led to the same vision of the birth of Buddha, and of other saviours of man. So India had its Maya, the Virgin Mother of Buddha, and Devaki, the Virgin Mother of Christna; each of whom was represented by art in the great temples, as holding her divinely born son in her arms, in forms that might well take the place of our familiar Madonna and the Infant Jesus.

The monogram of my own parish in New York had its familiar and suggestive symbolism. There was first the circle—the natural sign of unity, infinity, eternity, perfection—God. The circle has been this same symbol in ages far back of

Christianity, in religions which we think of as only Pagan. It is the natural human symbolism for these transcendent conceptions. The trefoil and the triangle were drawn within the enspheringing circle. They symbolize the mystery which Christian dogma represents in the doctrine of the Divine Trinity:—not a doctrine of three Gods, but simply of a threefoldness in the one God. These sacred signs were used in the temples of paganism in Egypt and in India, with the same significance. Man, in ancient times, had learned to recognize a manifoldness in the Divine Unity. He had learned to express this variety in unity by the conception of God as being three in one. The conception is thus ancient and universal, and its symbol is as wide as the thought. Finally, the monogram held, within these designs, the most sacred sign of religion, the Cross.

In all our churches stand certain sacred symbols most intimately associated with the deepest life of man in Christianity. In every church you will find the font and the table or the altar—the account of the ancient derivation of which has been given in the first chapter of this volume.

The font is the stone symbol of the rite of baptism, itself an active symbol of the spiritual life. Baptism, the symbol of initiation into the Christian church, is far older than Christianity—it is as old as spiritual religion in every land and under every form. Our Christian baptism thus proves to be the natural development of the same sacred symbolism which suggested itself to the souls of men in ancient times and in different lands—the natural and necessary, the beautiful and divine symbolism of the washing away of sins and the entering upon a new and higher life.

The table in the chancel—when one still sees this primitive wooden symbol of the Holy Supper—is the outward and material sign of the rite which is itself a symbol of an ethical and spiritual truth—the communion of man with man, in holy brotherhood; the communion of man with God, in divine fellowship. The table—the board on which the social supper of the Christian brotherhood is spread, is the material symbol of the fraternity which ought to exist in every Christian church; which did once exist in every Christian society; a veritable, real and living bond of

brotherhood. The primitive supper of the Lord, the Agapæ or Love Feast, was an outgrowth from the sacred social meal of the secret confraternities of working men in the Roman Empire. In the lodge rooms of those confraternities of labor, stood the table—the outward and visible sign of the social supper—around which the persecuted societies met in secret and partook together of a common meal in sign of their life in common.

Around this sacred table, in the Christian church, we meet, not simply to sign and seal the communion of the saints, the fellowship of man with man, but to sign and seal the communion of each man with God, the fellowship of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit. As previously pointed out, this same symbolism prevailed in ancient times in different forms of religion, when the lower paganisms of nature-worship reached up into the stress and strain of the soul, to find God, and to become partakers of the Divine Life,—the Life of Purity and Goodness. In all lands, and under all religions, as man grew spiritual, his religion became a spiritual longing—a longing of the human spirit after the Divine Spirit. And the

symbol of this fellowship became the symbolism which we still cherish. The confusion of the symbol with the truth symbolized is the danger of all symbolism. None the less how natural and necessary, how beautiful and divine, this symbolism! No other has ever suggested itself to the soul of man, so fitting, so helpful. It comes down to us hallowed with memories of the ages.

In many of our churches, in lieu of the table, there is the altar. A later growth in the Christian Church, this—in part, an ecclesiastical departure from primitive Christianity; a reproduction of the sacerdotalism and sacramentalism common to Judaism, and to most forms of paganism; but, in part, also, something deeper and truer—a natural symbolic evolution. From the beginning, in the simple sacrament of the Supper of the Lord, the memorial of the Divine Sufferer, there was imbedded the central and essential idea of sacrifice—as, alone, the means whereby human fellowship is cemented; alone, the means whereby the fellowship of man with God is perfected. And so the symbolism of sacrifice gradually usurped the place of the symbolism of fellowship

and communion, and the table grew into the altar. The altar, we find everywhere in ancient religions. In the beginnings of every religion, it is the outward symbol, in stone, of the superstitious and barbarous conception of sacrifice, which naturally prevailed among superstitious and barbarous people. Life was offered to the angry god, to propitiate his favor and to buy man's ransom from his wrath. But as man grew more ethical and spiritual, his vision of God grew purer and nobler, his vision of sacrifice grew sweeter and truer. He discerned that the only sacrifice acceptable to a righteous and living God, is the sacrificial life of service, by which man helps his fellow into the diviner life, and thus enters, himself, into that divine life, the life of the God Who is ever coming forth, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Thus, in every religion of antiquity, in its higher forms, the initiates of the Spirit discerned, through the altar symbolism, the great truth of the altar life—the life surrendering pleasure to duty, interest to service, self to man—to God. We repeat every Communion Sunday, in higher, purer, more ethical and spirit-

ual forms, the sacred symbolism of our ancestors, whereby they expressed the deepest truth discerned by man, that the bond of brotherhood is sealed in blood, the giving of life; that the fellowship of man with God is an entering into the divine life of service.

The vast volume of research in the study of the sources of sacred symbolism, which through its significances, records the common intuitions and aspirations of mankind and shows Christianity to be the flower of paganism, can be drawn on further here in but a few brief surveys. Archæologically and ethnically the study calls for a review of limitless and ever increasing material. Philosophically, a little touched upon suffices.

Prayer, which in the secret place of the soul, as individual communion with God, rises above all symbolism, into pure thought and aspiration, cannot be thus sublimated in the great assembly. It must needs then take on outward and visible forms, and become the uttered prayer. It will then, for the sake of dignity and order, call in the aid of the highest arts, literary art and musical art, and become thus a symbol, an outward and

visible sign of the inward communion of the soul with God. Our liturgies are oftentimes noble works of literary art, and, when wedded to music, are noble works of the highest dramatic art—music lifting the aspiration of the soul and winging the spirit's longings upward after God. It would be possible to trace hints, through our liturgical forms, of the same sources which we have seen to exist in other symbols. If we turn to the Litanies in which the Catholic saints are supplicated, we shall find strange resemblances to the ancient Litanies in which the pagan gods and goddesses were supplicated. The Litany of Our Lady of Loretto, for example, we placed, sentence by sentence, alongside of the Hindu Litany of Our Lady Nari, and the Egyptian Litany of Our Lady Isis, in parallel columns, and there were shown to be scarcely more changes in the language than were necessitated by the change of names from paganism to Christianity.[1] Even that touchingly simple and intensely earnest invocation in our central office of worship, so long in use in the Christian Church, under the name of Kyrie

[1] See page 11.

Eleison, Lord have Mercy upon Us, is a close reproduction of a part of the Litany to the Supreme God, either among the Greeks or the Latins, or both, in which, an ancient author says that, "invoking God, we pray to Him after this manner —Lord, have mercy upon us," Kyrie Eleison. So inevitably does the human spirit run its thoughts and phrases into similar moulds of form, when it enters into similar stages of thought and feeling.

There are other, and yet higher, symbols in our Christianity, less material, more purely mental. There is a literary art, as well as a pictorial or a musical art. Literary art has been called into service in seeking to fashion fit forms for man's thoughts of the infinite and transcendent mysteries. Then, because they transcend all clear, cold, intellectual perception, imagination has been summoned to the service of the soul, and has sought to image, in pictorial forms of expression, these sacred mysteries.

IV

CHRISTIANITY THE FLOWER OF PAGANISM

When I was a boy I had a little flower garden. The flowers did not come forward fast enough to suit me, and so one day I bought some roses and tied them to sticks and thrust them into the ground, and had my garden ripening in an hour. Is Christianity such a garden, in which the flowers of life and truth are merely stuck into the soil of humanity; or is it a genuine garden in which every bud and blossom is a real growth from the living soil? Mormonism claims that its constitution and polity, its body of truth and system of worship have been let down straight from the skies. The book of Mormon was found, so runs the legend among the devout, by the great Prophet where an angel had left it after writing it. Is Christianity such a body of truth and system of

worship, dropped from the heavens; or is it a genuine growth of humanity?

The claims of ecclesiasticism on this point are familiar enough to ears that have been well dinned with their blatant pretensions. Our wonderful age has made clear to candid minds the facts of the case. Of these facts but a few more need be touched upon to supplement the review previously assigned to the rôle of "Pagan."

In its organization, Christianity is now confessed by the highest authorities to have been a natural development of pre-existing systems, ecclesiastic, civic and political. The Church grew out of the simplest and most rudimentary beginnings; following the lines of the trellis which the Jewish Church and the Roman Empire had reared for it. The Jewish synagogue, with its system of administration and form of worship, supplied the pattern for the Christian *ecclesia* or Church. The hierarchal form of Christianity, which is found most fully developed in catholicism, is the Jewish priestly system transferred to Christianity. The gradual consolidation of the scattered Christian societies took shape from the mould of

organization which the genius of Imperial Rome had fashioned for its political administration. Parish, diocese and province are but the old territorial divisions of Rome, rising into an ecclesiastical empire as of old into a political empire. Institutional Christianity is thus a growth from pre-existent and pagan forms of organization—whether of the paganism of Israel or the paganism of Rome.

In its philosophical symbolisms, as well as in its concrete symbols, Christianity stands now confessed as a growth from pre-existent religions.

The Christian Church holds, as a word thrown out at the mystery of sin, the familiar story of the Fall in Eden. Was this new with Christianity? On the contrary, it is now traced through many ancient peoples, as far back as the light of history reaches. The human mind had of necessity raised the question of the origin of evil long before our era, and had fashioned the parable of this mystery, into which, as an heirloom of the ages, Christianity entered. To go no further than the direct ancestral line of Christianity the Eden parable had been in the possession of Israel centuries before our era, and it had been drawn by Israel

from the earlier civilization out of which the Hebrew sprang. From the long buried ruins of this civilization we have unearthed the records of its religion, and read to-day on the tablets of the Chaldean Genesis fragments of the cycle of legends of which the poem of the Garden of Eden formed a part. A rude outline sketch, so strangely preserved to us from this vast antiquity, reproduces the unmistakable picture familiar to us in the words of our Genesis—the sacred tree, the woman standing beneath, reaching forth her hand to pluck the fruit, the serpent on the other side of the tree as though whispering in her ear—curiously poised in the very fashion which Milton imagined, erect in spiral form upon his tail.

Our creeds are rightly called "symbols." They are mental transparencies, through which we look at the unseen realities; images of spiritual verities; "words thrown out at" the transcendent mysteries. They stand for truths which cannot stand out into visible form in the human mind. They are mental symbols. They too are not new but old, not manufacturers of Christianity but growths of humanity. The great dogmas antedate our

Christian era. They were in the world before the Church. The Fathers were but children in the study of these venerable beliefs.

The second paragraph of the Nicene Creed, which concerns the personality of Jesus, the Christ, is pure philosophy. But, it is poetic philosophy, mystical philosophy, imaginative philosophy—philosophy in symbolic forms, picturing what cannot be stated in precise terms. Now every phrase in the opening of this second section of the Nicene Creed, has been beaten and hammered into shape on the anvils of man's thought, in ages anterior to Christianity. Every term employed therein to set forth the relation of Jesus to the universe, the cosmic aspects of Christian truth, was fashioned before Christianity, by the philosophers of Greece and of the East. Every word thereof has been coined in the mints of ancient philosophy, centuries before the age of Jesus. The Christian Fathers found these words ready fashioned, these picture words ready drawn to use. They could not have invented new terms. They used the old terms, to set forth the new thought—making the old terms grow larger, to

cover the larger new thought. The philosophy that is therein represented, is the ancient, human, mystic, poetic, imaginative, spiritual philosophy of the universe.

The Christian Church has held a symbol of the mystery of the nature of the Infinite and Eternal Being—the most ineffable and transcendent of all mysteries—the dogma of the Trinity. Is this distinctly Christian? On the contrary, its ancestry is unmistakably pagan. The curious may ponder over various ancient Jewish symbolic representations of the Trinity, which might well enough serve for the decoration of our Christian Churches. Greece was not without its parallel imaginations. Egypt rejoiced in this doctrine. At the summit of its Pantheon of divinities was the mystic triad—Osiris, Isis and Horus. The device familiar to students of Egyptian antiquities—a winged disc with a serpent proceeding from the disc—was the art-symbol of the threefold nature of Deity. The dark disc represented God the unknown as the source of all things; the serpent stood for the divine wisdom, the emanation of the unseen God, and the wings pictured the

brooding and protecting care of the Divine Spirit. Chaldea had a similar symbol. The mysterious source of all things was Ilu. His first three exterior and visible manifestations composed a triad, at the summit of the hierarchy of gods: Anu, the primordial chaos; Hea, the intelligence, or, as we might say, the Word which animated nature and made it fertile, which penetrated the universe, directed and inspired it with life; and Bel, the demi-urgus, a ruler of the organized universe. India, most venerable of all civilizations, had the same symbol. Every one knows of the sacred syllable repeated by the Brahmins as the most mystic act of worship—AUM. This, among the initiates, was written as the points of a triangle, each sacred letter standing for one of the threefold manifestations of deity—thus:

A
Creation.

U
Preservation.

M
Transformation.

The popular form of Brahminism recognized the divine triad, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, separate

gods to the unenlightened masses, but to the instructed man only the persons or *personæ*, or masks or forms of the mysterious triunity, God the Creator, the Preserver, the Destroyer or Transformer. "The number three forms your essence."

It is needless to refer to other mental symbols of Christianity for illustration of the fact that our Christian thought is older far than Christianity; that it was pagan before it became Christian. Dr. Lundy shows how each separate article of the Apostles' Creed finds artistic illustration in the catacombs of primitive Christianity, and in the far earlier symbolism of Greece and Rome from which the first Christians naturally drew their conceptions. In his pages we realize the fact that our Christian symbolism, artistic and intellectual, is in reality the symbolism of humanity.

Such being the facts concerning our Christian symbolism, artistic and intellectual, what conclusion are we to draw from them?

These facts dispose once and forever, in candid minds, of all purely priestly claims of ecclesiasticism—its claims to a monopoly of magical and

miraculous rites, and to the possession of an oracle for the transmission of infallible and authoritative dogmas. A baptism in which children are not figuratively but really born again into a higher spiritual life; a mass in which the faithful eat of the very body and blood of the Son of God; a confessional in which the penitent pours out his tale of shame as into the ears of God, receiving as from the lips of the Most High assurance of pardon; priests clothed with power to work such miracles, holding even the keys to heaven and hell; a Church commissioned and empowered to fashion in final forms the thought of man concerning the Infinite and Eternal Mysteries; placed in the world to impose those forms of belief upon the reason and the conscience of man; holding the human intellect by its apron strings so that man may not question apart from its permission, acknowledge truth which it does not sanction, or think to know aught which it does not reveal—such marvels are no longer to be received by him who sees these institutions and beliefs flowering out from the roots of paganism, the Church itself no miracle, but a natural evolution.

To reasonable men there is but one reasonable conclusion. The priestly claims of Christianity are as valid as the priestly claims of Buddhism or of any other "ism." Men who borrow their rites and dogmas must not take on airs as of spiritual millionaires. I grieve ever to waste a word over the follies and wrongs of such a fossil of religion as ecclesiasticism. But alas! in our own Church this fossil is a fetich before which hosts of men are still bowing in superstitious awe. Even as I write these pages there comes to me a description of the astonishing growth in my native city of the ecclesiastical type of churchmanship. In unctuous eloquence the prosperous piety of a great Church there is described, in which, as one of the choicest seals of his ministry, Father —— has lately acquired a six hundred dollar chasuble. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father" is then to wear surplices of finest lace embroidered in threads of gold! This is the folly of ecclesiasticism, but its crime one cannot measure until he measures the turning aside of the ethical and spiritual forces from social activities to the driving of ecclesiastical enginery; until he measures

the revolt of the reason of man from an infallible Church preternaturally formulating impossible statements of inconceivable mysteries. Full-blown Christian Ecclesiasticism does not stop short of the monstrous superstition which the Hindu priesthood most frankly expressed in the famous formula: "All that exists is in the power of the gods. The gods are under the power of magical conjurations. The magical conjurations are under the control of the Brahmins. Hence the gods are in the power of the Brahmins." And such an ecclesiasticism is the ideal of "the advanced movement," which, crab-fashion, is seeking in the superstitions of the past a readjustment of Religion.

All this folly and crime of ecclesiasticism stands shamed in the daylight of history, in which we recognize the natural growth of the material and mental symbolism of Christianity and thus see the natural growth of the Christian Church itself. The true readjustment of Religion is the return through the religion about Jesus to the religion of Jesus. That men may be free to return to the simple, essential religion of Jesus, they must feel

the yoke of ecclesiasticism breaking from their souls; they must stand delivered from the bondage to magical rites and superstitious experiences; enslaved no longer to infallible oracles; rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free. There is a fine old Spartan saying which Plutarch gives us:

Spartan: "Is it to thee or to God that I must confess?"

Priest: "God."

Spartan: "Then man stand back."

Ecclesiasticism, however, is not Christianity, thank God! Facts which make against ecclesiasticism do not necessarily make against Christianity, but on the contrary may make for its essential claims. Raw "come-outers" will denounce Christianity as a fraud of the priesthood, and excoriate the Church as a poor imitation of paganism. They will wax wrathful over the folly of attending the services of such a Church, and grow eloquent on the duty of emancipating one's self from its childish superstitions, and of living up to the brand new gospel of three square meals a day, and a go-as-you-please walk over the course

of life. Thus a raw learning may find such an argument, which it is only too glad to use against Christianity. Sciolists indulge in very unscientific talk about this matter.

A certain weekly of New York criticized the view which I am now presenting as admitting "that the rites and at least a part of the doctrines of the Orthodox Church are only a re-hash of those instituted by ancient paganism." Is a flower a re-hash of the roots? Is a man a re-hash of the boy? Is our modern civilization a re-hash of the Germanic and Roman civilizations out of which it has sprung and which it has led up to a nobler development? Our age of science, with its general acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, ought to have saved us from such a stupendous misconception of history as the average "come-outer" makes over such facts of history. What they really prove is that Christianity is an evolution.

As an evolution Christianity was obliged to take up and carry along with it hosts of pagan imaginations and conceptions, rites and usages, thoughts and feelings; hoping gradually to vital-

ize them and transform them into its own higher life. It is doubtless a lamentable fact, but it is an inevitable one in any historic progress, that compromises have to be made between the higher and the lower thought of humanity. Great men come into the world with great ideals only to find that they cannot lift the mass to their level at a bound, that they must gradually lead ignorance and superstition and selfishness up to the heights of nobler life. If the ideal cuts loose from the actual and gets out of sight from it, it will be lost and the actual will go on in its prosaic level, not even seeking to mount upward. The ideal must "slow up," must not break its couplings with the actual, must be content to drag after it the dead weight of all the unideal life, if man is ever to be drawn to the skies.

The story of every great religious movement has been one and the same. The early inspiration has not succeeded in suddenly transforming the mass of life; it has succeeded, however, in fixing an ideal toward which men have slowly striven. To keep hold of that slow upward striving, the new movement has been obliged to accept the

average life, with its institutions and customs and usages and symbols and notions—in short, to sink itself for awhile in the mass as the leaven sinks itself in the lump of dough. There is danger, of course, that the leaven may not be powerful enough to ærate the dough, and then the lump will remain sodden and the yeast will have expended itself in vain. But, if it is ever to leaven the whole lump, it must run the risk. It may have been an evidence of declining spiritual power in the Church, but none the less, the fact was, as attested by history, that as the Christian Church organized itself, it was drawn into all manner of compromises, out of which at last emerged a Christianity which was Christian in the Head, but pagan in the body and feet; its higher natures charged with the ethical and spiritual ideal which lived in Jesus, its lower natures following the Master afar off while treading in the ways of their heathen fathers. Paganism in this lower sense survived because the average man continued untransformed by the ideal of Christ. Paganism still thus survives. Scratch the Russian and you will find a Tar-

tar. Scratch the Christian and you will find a pagan.

Much of our business is conducted on thoroughly pagan principles. The statecraft of even "most Christian kings" is unblushingly pagan. The religion of the uneducated masses is the superstition of our heathen ancestry, re-baptized with Christian names. It is not that we have made no progress, but it is that what was then the thought and feeling of the higher men has become the thought and feeling of the average men; and that what were then the intellectual ideas and the ethical ideals of the average men have been pushed down beneath the ascending feet of humanity and left as the ideas and ideals of the lowest classes of our civilization. The Church of Rome is undoubtedly chiefly pagan, but it has to deal, for the most part, with thoroughly heathen classes, among whom it is doing a needful and beneficent work; leaving to them the magical rites and superstitious beliefs without which they would think that they had no religion, while it gradually educates them in the life of the Master which in due time will deliver them from this bondage. If

any Church is prepared to justify its ecclesiastical paganism by confessing that it ministers to pagan classes, let it stand excused before civilization. But if its vaunt is that it ministers to the classes of culture, let its shame be that it ministers to them still as though they had not been led up out of superstition.

Christianity was not, however, wholly a surrender to the lower forms of paganism—it was a victory over them in which the conqueror entered into the possession of his conquest. The Church retained what pleased it among the goods of the bankrupt ancient religions, turning them to new and higher uses. There was a noble paganism which it was well for man not to lose and which Christianity preserved for him. When we come upon traces of pagan symbolism in our churches or in our creeds, the reverent man will not turn away from them, ashamed of their origin. If he be reasonable and reverent together he will feel just as the American would feel who had suddenly awakened to the consciousness that he was an offshoot of a venerable and noble family; that back of his own individual life

there was a mighty ancestral life, stately and splendid.

It is a glory to have behind us in our Christian institutions and symbolisms and doctrines eighteen centuries of ancestry—but it is a far greater glory to have behind us five or six thousand years of traceable spiritual ancestry. It is an honor to be rooted in one line of noble religion, to feel identified with the aspiration of such a religion as Christianity—but it is a far greater honor to be identified with humanity, to feel one's spiritual rootings going as far down into the past as we can trace our way, and reaching out through all the ramifications of human life, sucking up into the rare flower, which we call Christianity, the richest forces and sweetest juices of the soul of man in Greece and Rome, in Egypt and Persia, in Chaldea and India. One feels consciously larger in his religious life as he becomes aware of the fact that he has grown out of nothing less than the universal human soul. These institutions are infinitely more venerable to us as heirlooms of a far back antiquity than they could ever have been as the manufactures of a Christian Church. The most

common and simple symbol of religious art grows more beautiful and sacred as it gathers around it thus the hallowed associations, not only of centuries, but of thousands of years. The most trivial and seemingly superstitious usage loses its offensiveness and becomes an object of reverent interest as we see generation after generation of men feeling through these forms after God, if haply they might find him. We, who feel ill at ease at times within our mental symbols, may pause still longer before we rudely tear them down, as remembering the ages that have housed their souls within these forms of thought. It is almost with a thrill of reverence that I look round upon these symbols and remember that, far back in the dim ages which history scarcely lights, the children of men have bowed before the same Infinite and Eternal Mystery as worshiping through these very forms.

There is a popular legend in Brittany concerning an imaginary town called Is, which is fancied to have been engulfed by the sea in the ages long gone by. If you hearken to the tales of the weather-beaten fishermen, they will tell you that

now and then, when the sea is rough, the spires of the churches in the old town may be seen in the waves, while during a calm their sacred bells, chiming the hymn appointed for the day, lift a weird music from the depths of the waters. Thus, in the calm of our thought, we stand by the great sea of life and from the depths in which civilizations have gone down and religions have been engulfed there steal upon our inner ears the low strains of the sweet aspiring spirit-voices which still haunt our symbols, our rites, our forms and our faiths.

The antiquity of our Christian symbolism attests a somewhat essentially true and beautiful in these ancient forms. Time is a great winnowing fan. It sifts out with merciless severity all that is unworthy. What survives is what is upon the whole most worthy to survive. The survival of the fittest—this is the key to historic evolution. This key unlocks the realm of religion as well as every other realm. A host of symbols have been fashioned and thrown away; a multitude of thoughts have been formed and then discarded. Man has grown out of multitudinous

conceptions and imaginations. He has left behind him on his road upward the debris of images which he has laboriously shaped only to break them into pieces when they have ceased to be transparent windows into the Infinite and Eternal. The higher forms of paganism preserved the symbols, artistic and mental, which had thus shown themselves worthy of being cherished.

Wisdom has not been born into the world in our generation. Although the ancients had no telephones and steam engines, no machine-made shoes and cotton prints, they were by no means fools. They thought deeply and shaped nobly their polities and symbols and beliefs. A man does not borrow a tattered and worn cloak. If Christianity arrayed itself in the garments of paganism it was because upon the whole the higher paganism had fashioned worthy vestments for the soul of man. The Christian Church did wisely in copying the system of the synagogue, as eighteen centuries of Church life has well attested. Why do we repeat these familiar devices of sacred art in our church, generation after generation, except because they are fitting expres-

sions of spiritual truths? Why did the early Christians adopt them from the pagan temples in which they had been reared except that they found in them better forms of thought and feeling than any they could fashion for themselves? When you go down into the Roman Catacombs and see in the earliest Christian art the old Grecian forms of Orpheus and Apollo standing for Christ, you feel at once instinctively the natural appropriateness of these symbols. Those exquisitely ideal conceptions which Grecian art had given became the natural symbols of him in whom man found the realization of the spell of Orpheus, and the grace of Apollo.

When I have ceased to look upon baptism and the eucharist superstitiously, have I then lost my reverence for these sacred heirlooms of the ages? On the contrary they never have seemed to me so natural, so true, so beautiful, as symbols of spiritual mysteries, as now they do. What more natural symbol of spiritual cleansing than baptism —in its original form always immersion in the cleansing water of the stream, from which man emerged as upon a new life? No wonder that so

many different religions fashioned this natural symbol. If we had no baptism handed down to us from our fathers, and if we lived near to nature we should make such a rite for ourselves. What more natural symbol of the spiritual communion of man with the unseen source and spring of his being than this sacred supper, in which we partake of bread that strengtheneth man's heart, and wine that maketh him of a joyful countenance, and thus outwardly sign to ourselves that inward partaking of the life which is the bread of strength for man and the wine of joy for his soul! If we had no Supper of the Lord handed down to us from our fathers, we should be constrained to fashion anew this beautiful symbol of natural religion. Only now this venerable symbol of natural religion is forever hallowed with the personal association of him who reinstituted it as a memorial of himself. I wonder with an inexpressible wonder at the turning away of men from symbols which are thus not only consecrated by the use of ages, but which are intrinsically the very sacraments of Nature. Our formulas for the great mysteries seem to us often utterly inade-

quate, and as shaped by later ages of Christianity they become almost caricatures of the truths they seek to express; but when we return to the primitive symbolism of thought which early Christianity received as the heir of paganism, we find forms which are still full of meaning, exquisite poems of spiritual truth, profound parables of the unspeakable realities. How full of meaning for us still is that old story of the Fall found in our Genesis any one may see for himself who ponders Hawthorne's "Marble Faun." We can as yet find no more fitting expression of the mystery of the Divine Being, at once the One and the Many, than that most ancient and venerable formula of belief inherited by Christianity from paganism—the Doctrine of the Trinity.

We thus gain a conception of the true historic position of Christianity. It is no upstart religion dispossessing the faiths of antiquity—it is their child. Their blood beats in its veins; their spirit breathes in its life. It is the heir of the ages. It enters upon the possession of man's soul by right of lineage. It is the legitimate successor of the religions which, through ages past, have held

sway upon the earth, and the great thoughts and imaginations of paganism have been deeded over to it, to be held in trust for man. Christianity is in reality the flowering out of paganism; the philosophy of Plato, the ethical spirit of Socrates, the tender and pure humanity of Virgil, the heroism of the Stoics—the best life of all the past coming forth in it into new forms. The true claim of Christianity upon our modern world is, that it is a natural growth of religion, the highest form thus far reached by the spiritual aspiration of mankind, in the historic evolution of the race.

Christianity thus takes its place in the universal system of God's education of man. The growth of the soul of man is an unfolding of the Spirit of God.

If the doctrine of evolution teaches us anything, it teaches us that true progress must not dissever the present from the past. We can readily enough fashion in theory more perfect social institutions than those found in our civilization, but society wisely prefers the slow and sure method of growing our imperfect institutions out into higher forms. We do not want new institu-

tions or new symbols or new faiths in religion, but the old institutions and symbols and beliefs developed further. The plant will not grow the better for cutting its roots. Man has not lived through the past for naught. The past must lie beneath the present as the foundation of its security, the source of its life. Christianity to-day is the conservatism of religion—keeping up the connection between the present and the past.

Religion may not rest in the present—it must reach forward into the future. It must be progressive as well as conservative. While it roots in the past it must throw forth its shoots of new-growing life into the free air of heaven. The past must not be a mould to cramp the present and thus to stifle the future; it must simply be the ground upon which we stand as we mount upward, the soil from which to draw the forces of the life which grows ever higher. Christianity, in its present form, must not assume to be the final fashioning of religion; it must hold itself plastic to the forces which are growing within it toward a development as yet unseen. Max Müller says:

The religion of the future will be the fulfilment of all the religions of the past—the true religion of humanity, that which, in the struggle of history, remains as the indestructible portion of all the so-called false religions of mankind.

In so far as Christianity is such a survival of the fittest in religion, the religion of the future will probably prove to be the Christian religion sublimated. It will be an out-putting from the old historic stem which, in its turn, has sprung from the main stock of humanity. All this we learn as we look around to see in our Christian churches the signs of the past in a present which holds the promise and potency of the future.

We thus gain a yet higher thought. Dr. Lundy declares the conclusion to which he had been led by his study of the relations of Christian symbolism to pagan symbolism: "Religion is essentially one in faith and practice, under various modifications, perversions, corruptions and developments." When the June rose opens on the bush, you know that down to the tiniest rootlet the bush throughout is a rosebush. Roots and stock and stem and branches and leaves and buds are only the different

developments of one common life. Since Christianity has blossomed forth from paganism, paganism was essentially Christian. One sap runs through the race. One blood pulses through humanity. Religions are one and the same religion in different stages of development. The Christian is simply the pagan educated higher—the pagan was the child Christian. The strongest claim of Christianity is, that it is more than Christian—that it is human. And that which is essentially human is really divine.

Let us then hearken to the sum of the whole matter in the admirable counsels of catholicity which preface Mr. Schermerhorn's "Sacred Scriptures of the World."

> Whosoever doeth the will of my father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother. (Saying of Jesus.)
>
> Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that revereth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him. (Saying of the Apostle Peter.)
>
> The catholic-minded man regards all religions as embodying the same truths; the narrow-minded man observes only their differences. (Chinese Apothegm.)

Altar flowers are of many species, but all worship is one; systems of faith are different, but God is one. (Hindu Apothegm.)

He who is beloved of God honors every form of Religious Faith. (Buddhist Scripture.)

Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Is there not everywhere the same enrapturing beauty beaming forth from many thousand hidden places? Broad, indeed, is the carpet God has spread, and beautiful the colors He has given it. . . . There is but one lamp in this house, in the rays of which, wherever I look, a bright assembly meets me. . . . O God! whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to Thee. (Persian Scriptures.)

To him who on these pinions has risen and soared away to the throne of the Highest, all religions are alike; Christians, Moslems, Guebers, Jews—all adore Him in their several way and form. (Persian Apothegm.)

V

THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF PAGANISM—THE OPEN SECRET OF CHRISTIANITY

While yet the winter holds Nature in cold concealment, we know that before many weeks have passed the lilac bushes will stand transfigured in the glory of spring. When those delicate purple clusters come forth upon the common looking bushes, there will be a revelation of the inner secret of the plain, prosaic clumps by the side of the old farm houses. Every element entering into the fibers of the bush will be sublimated in the flower; the juices of the sap will be spiritualized; the meaning of roots and stem and branch and bud and blossom will come forth into the light of open day. Then we shall say, thinking of the common bush of winter: "There, that is what it was meaning all along."

History is an evolution; that is, an organic

growth, whose earlier and rudimentary stages are to be interpreted in its later developments. The secret of religion in its wintry periods is to be disclosed in the spring-time of the spirit.

Christianity is the flower of paganism. In this fact we find at once the vindication of paganism and the justification of Christianity. There was an inner hidden life of paganism, to find which we have to go within the surface, and scratch away the bark of institutions and symbols and dogmas, in order that we may get at the sap flowing in the veins of humanity. There was an esoteric religion of the past veiled behind the exoteric forms of paganism; the religion of the few back of the religion of the many; truth as fashioned in the understanding of the philosophers; life, as visioned in the aspirations of the saints; the faith and hope of the seers; the mysteries of being as read by the mystics.

There is an ugly look about such a statement; as though it meant that there was a conscious and deliberate purpose, on the part of scholars and priests, to keep for themselves the kernel of truth while they offered to the masses the dry husks.

Every one remembers that masterful picture in which the Roman augurs are preparing to feed the sacred birds kept for the auspices, while they can scarcely restrain their convulsive laughter over the superstitious folly of the people to which they owe their own comfortable keeping at the expense of society. Doubtless this picture types a fact in the later and decadent stages of many a religion; but if so, the crafty priests are more to be pitied than the honest people. I had rather be the most ignorant peasant, creeping into the great cathedral with a superstitious awe, and counting my beads in devout simplicity, than the cultivated priest who smiles behind his conscious mummery, or the scholar in the pulpit who repeats the dogmas in which he no longer believes, but which he thinks the people must needs yet be taught to trust.

I do not believe that in any vital religion there is such conscious doubleness. I do believe, however, that there is a necessary esoteric thought and life within the most living religion; not as a designed monopoly of the elect, but as the reservation forced upon the few by the inability of

the many to receive the higher conceptions and experiences.

Do you mean to deceive your boy when, standing by the window, at the close of day, you say to him as the fiery orb disappears: "The sun has set?" You are talking to him like a Ptolemaic astronomer, as though you believed in the obsolete theory that the sun is revolving around the fixed earth. When your boy gets older he may possibly accuse you of fraud in having been all the while a Copernican astronomer, believing that the earth revolves around the sun while the sun itself is moving in its majestic march through the heavens. Was there any conscious doubleness or purposed fraud in your method of instructing your boy? If you had tried to give him the higher thought it would have been lost upon him. To him the sun seems to set. You give him the conception for which he is ready, knowing full well that, when he becomes a man, he will put away this childish thing. Popular notions go before scientific conceptions. The child can only see what his mind can mirror; can only think what his vocabulary of thought can translate.

Imperfect truth is often better than perfect truth. Absolutely perfect truth is not within our grasp, out of the realm of pure mathematics. Truth is a matter of degrees, and men think and believe as they are able. To-day what a contrast religion presents under one and the same nominal faith! How little alike John Henry Newman's thought of the Infinite Mysteries and the thought of the ignorant servant girl who comes to early mass! The great cardinal would try in vain to give her his higher ideas. No words could communicate those ideas to her mind. As Emerson walked smilingly along the shady streets of Concord of a Sunday morning, he had no wish to shut himself up in his mystic thought of the Over-Soul —but what impassable gulfs yawned between him and his neighbors wending their way to the orthodox meeting-houses to worship the Jewish Jehovah.

And yet this is an age of general education. What then must have been the contrasts of thought in ages when the mass of people had little or no education, when mind and conscience were alike rudimentary, and when over those dark

valleys towered the mountain heights on which walked the sages and philosophers, the mystics and the saints? How could Socrates make the giddy Athenian youths understand the whispers of his dæmon? He spoke the word heard within, and they gave him the cup of hemlock. How could the Buddha communicate to his fellow countrymen his rapt experiences? He tried to tell them the things he had heard and seen and his gospel turned, in the heavy atmosphere of the average man, into a new charter for ecclesiastical religion, and the Buddhist Church well-nigh stifled the Divine Voice in the rubrics of the Sacred Order. How could Jesus interpret to the dull ears of his good Galileans the secrets of his conversation with his Father? They overheard once a voice from heaven speaking with him. "The people therefore that stood by and heard it said that it thundered; others said, an angel spake to him."

My conception of the inner and hidden religion of the past is that it was the higher thought of the philosophic minds upon the great problems of life, the intuitions of the poet-souls, the solemn

experiences of the mystics in communing with the unseen spheres, the pure aspirations of the saintly natures whom God has ever sent to every people to keep the light shining and the fire burning in the shrine of the one true temple—humanity. Each of these priests of Man could only well have spoken at all as saying:

> That moment that his face I see,
> I know the man that must hear me;
> To him my tale I teach.

When these masters wrote their works they must needs have been sealed books to those who having eyes see not. Thus there must have grown up mystic writings in a tongue "not understanded of the people"—through no fault of the writers but only of the readers. There was doubtless need then as now not to cast pearls before swine; not to force truth on men's minds when unprepared to receive it; not to pour in too much light lest instead of clearer vision there should be blindness; not to tell rashly of things that "it was not lawful to utter."

It is certainly possible that there were secret

Orders of Initiates, as many have imagined and as we know to have been the fact to a certain extent—the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, the Hierophants of Egypt, the Theodidaktoi of Greece, the Rishis of India—among whom a hidden wisdom was kept alive on earth. There were doubtless then, as there are now, priests and scholars who were selfishly content to let the mass of men cower beneath the clouds lying low over the dark valleys and shiver in their chill mists, while they sunned themselves on the mountain tops. But where religion is living it seeks to communicate itself. The spring that is not frozen flows forth to water the thirsty valleys. The sun strives to break through the clouds and flood the earth with light and warmth. The higher thought must needs have sought to speak itself forth, the higher life must inevitably have tried to vitalize the conduct and character of the mass of men. The true esoteric religion of antiquity must have been ever seeking to ennoble the beliefs and purify the lives of the people.

Thus, below the surface of the conventional religion, in many a land of antiquity, through the

fragments handed down from the past, one can often trace the movement of this hidden wisdom, gathering around some fit belief or institution or symbol, and seeking to lift the faith and worship and life of the people higher. To accomplish this there must have been organization; and to keep this organization vital with the higher thought and life there must have been in many ages a certain secrecy. In the earlier stages of Christianity, when its thoughts were certain to be misrepresented and its ideals sure to be abused, when publicity would have been quick degradation and corruption and would have brought down the persecuting hand of the State, we find that the young Church instinctively fashioned a Discipline of the Secret; an Order whose secrets were open only to the initiate; whose rites were Mysteries at which none but the faithful were admitted; and they only through the proper watchword.

Such Mysteries appear to have grown naturally beneath the surface of religion in many ancient lands. Egypt seems to have had a secret cult of Isis; Mithraicism, a later development of the Persian religion, centered in a similar organiza-

tion; and Greece had, as we know, several Sacred Mysteries. The best known, the Eleusinian Mysteries, were celebrated annually at the end of summer, about the 15th of September. Some ten days were devoted to the celebration. Each day's "services" formed part of a progressive system of object lessons in religion, which grew more solemn as the festival proceeded. All who chose to come were admitted to the celebrations of the earlier days, which formed the Lower Mysteries, but only the duly prepared initiates were allowed to witness the mystic splendors of the culminating scenes. Processions, pageants, symbolic rites formed the ritual for the inculcation of the truths which were more clearly taught through the chanting of sacred hymns, and the oracular utterances of mysterious words which were never to be repeated. The artistic genius of Greece was brought into the service of religion in fashioning this impressive ritual, and the celebration was in reality a sacred drama, advancing through successive stages toward its culmination in the weird scenes of the last night in a dark cave, which no one might make public, on fearful

pains and penalties. Every device to impress the emotional nature seems to have been carefully studied, with a resultant intensity of feeling on the part of the worshipers, such as has perhaps never before or since been secured in the methods of religion. It seems probable, also, that what are known now as "spiritualistic" experiences were not lacking in the later stages of the celebration, and that, in the darkness of midnight amid the hush of awe, visions appeared to the initiates and the unseen world seemed to open upon them. But through all the studied pomp of this Grecian sacrament and the eerie experiences of its nocturnal assemblies, the aim of moral and religious inspiration was never lost. However degenerate these Mysteries became in later days, in their vital period they were such true religious and moral forces that even Plato spoke well of them. They kept religion spiritual and morality ethical in Greece.

This inner religion which brooded in the cloistered halls of the sacred temples in the Nile valley, and which worked for the reformation of the popular religion through the sacraments of the mid-

night Mysteries in Greece, was substantially one and the same faith and hope and aspiration, under the natural variations of different lands and ages. The inner spirit of each living religion was kindred with the inner spirit of every other living religion. As the life mounted toward the bud, the same processes took place, the same formations ensued. When the flower came forth, it was the blossoming of every bud on every bough of the human tree. Christianity is thus the fulfilling of this hidden wisdom of antiquity. The highest truths of the past form its faith, the loftiest aspirations of the past breathed in its life. Christianity is the open secret of antiquity.

What then were the essential beliefs and aspirations which were shrined in this esoteric religion of antiquity?

First of all, the unity of God. The popular religion of all forms of paganism was polytheistic. The average man saw in the manifold forces of Nature so many different Divine Powers. He worshiped as many gods as he seemed to see working in Creation. The higher thought of antiquity saw these various powers of Nature to be but forms

of One Infinite and Eternal Force; the gods themselves as only personifications of the attributes and relationships of One Divine Being. The great religions of antiquity, in the persons of their highest representatives, tended toward this thought of the Unity of God; sometimes reaching it in a clear and definite Theism, and again confusing it in a vague and misty Pantheism.

In the Sacred Books of India we may read: "There is One Supreme Mind which transcends all other intelligences. It pervades the system of worlds and is yet infinitely beyond them. He exists by himself; He is All in all. . . . One Living and True God." The Buddhist Scriptures which are popularly supposed to be atheistic, thus speak: "O Thou Eternal One, Thou Perfection of Time, Thou Truest Truth, Thou Changeless Essence of Change, Thou Most Excellent Radiance of Mercy, I take refuge in Thee." A papyrus from one of the Egyptian tombs contains this sublime invocation: "Hail to Thee, O Ptah-tanen, great God who concealeth his form. . . . The Father of all fathers and of all gods. . . . Watcher who traversest the endless ages of Eternity. . . .

O God, architect of the world, Thou art without a father, begotten by Thine own becoming; Thou art without a mother, being born through repetition of Thyself. . . . Heaven and earth obey the commands which Thou hast given; they travel by the road which thou hast laid down for them. . . . Thou resteth, and it is night; when Thine eyes shine forth we are illuminated."

Greece quite clearly reached this vision of One God. "There is One Eternal God, the Cause of all things. He is the Divine Mind, the Infinite Wisdom; He brought Matter out of chaos into Order, and produced the world we see. . . . There is One Supreme Intelligence, who acts with order, proportioned and designed; the Source of all that is good and best." The famous Hymn of Cleanthes is a fine expression of the lofty Theism of Greece. From our schoolboy days we remember that immortal passage of Virgil that expresses so clearly the Theism which Rome had learned of Greece:

One Life through all the immense creation runs,
One Spirit is the moon's, the sea's, the sun's;
All forms in the air that fly, on the earth that creep,

And the unknown nameless monsters of the deep—
Each breathing thing obeys one Mind's control,
And in all substance is a single Soul.

Perhaps the noblest utterance of this pagan theism which has come down to us in the hymn of one who is known to Christians only as an early foe of Christianity, the so-called "infidel" Porphyry:

O God ineffable, eternal Sire,
Throned on the whirling spheres, the astral fire,
Hid in whose heart thy whole creation lies—
The whole world's wonder mirrored in thine eyes—
List thou thy children's voice, who draw anear,
Thou hast begotten us, Thou too must hear!
Each life thy life her Fount, her Ocean knows,
Fed while it fosters, filling as it flows;
Wrapt in thy light the star-set cycles roll,
And worlds within thee stir into a soul;
But stars and souls shall keep their watch and way,
Nor change the going of thy lonely day.

Some sons of thine, our Father, King of kings.
Rest in the sheen and shelter of thy wings—
Some to strange hearts the unspoken message bear,
Sped on thy strength through the haunts and homes
of air—
Some where thine honour dwelleth hope and wait,

Sigh for thy courts and gather at thy gate;
These from afar to thee their praises bring,
Of thee, albeit they have not seen thee, sing;
Of thee the Father wise, the Mother mild,
Thee in all children the eternal Child,
Thee the first Number and harmonious Whole,
Form in all forms, and of all souls the Soul.

As touching man, the hidden wisdom of antiquity taught that he was born in the skies, that he was in his essential nature a spiritual being, that he was destined therefore for immortality, that this immortality would prove the natural issue of the virtue or vice of earth, that the experiences of earth were designed to be the processes of purification through which man should free himself from evil and reascend to God. Thus the inner secret thought of paganism answered the old questions of man—Whence, What, Whither. All forms of mystic thought returned one answer to the question of man's origin. The doctrine of pre-existence was the secret of all poetico-philosophic speculation. It took on fantastic forms in many lands and as such has by us been treated lightly; but it was at heart always simply

the spiritual instinct which in Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality is so familiar to us all, the philosophy which in the Introduction to the Gospel according to St. John is sacred to us all. Each man must have first been in the Divine Thought before he is a fact of nature. "God thought of me and so I grew." As the ancients expressed it, a ray of Light proceeding forth from God has bodied itself in matter and lo! Man. This was the intuition which kept alive in humanity the sense of man's destiny. Spirit could not cease to be when the material body was laid away in the grave. Man was immortal. And this vision of man's origin and nature kept the thought of his destiny distinctly ethical.

Immortality was indeed an open secret in antiquity; but it was not held as an ethical faith, in the common forms of religion. Bliss was to be secured through the favor of the gods, and their favor was to be won by gifts. Misery was not the shadow of sin but the cloud that gathered in the frowns of the gods. The communion which Greece sought with the unseen world was too commonly only the guidance of the oracles in the

every-day business of life. We may see a picture of the lower religion of antiquity as communing with the spirit spheres in the lower ranks of modern Spiritualism, where men and women seek to satisfy their curiosity with uncanny experiences, gaining from their seances a belief in an unseen world which makes the seen world no more earnest, no more pure.

Back of all this, high above it, there was shrined in the minds of the sages, and burning in the hearts of the saints, a faith in Immortality that was thoroughly and intensely ethical. From the Library which the Chaldean Sargon collected in the "City of Books," to preserve the traditions of the primitive civilization of Mesopotamia, we draw forth to the light of day one of the earliest verses preserved to us from the "flood of years."

If evil thou doest,
To the everlasting sea
Thou shalt surely go.

We can best judge the ethical spirit of the inner faith of antiquity in immortality from the records

of the land where it blossomed into a belief of the people. From the folds of the mummy cloths wrapping the earthly remains of the great dead of Egypt we have taken out fragments of the Sacred Book of the Nile valley which, pieced together, give us the imposing funeral ritual known as the Book of the Dead. Perhaps no religion of earth has ever fashioned so impressive an ethical symbolism concerning the after-life as that which Egypt shaped in this "Book of the Dead." No unmeaning pomp and pageantry was that of these Egyptian rites, no fulsome compliments to the departed were paid by the officiating priests, but a vivid dramatic representation of the successive stages of the Judgment through which the dead was already passing made the living realize intensely that every man must give account for the deeds done in the body. The tombs of Egypt presented pictorially the same visions of the hereafter. One sees now, as the Egyptians saw centuries ago, their dead standing before the goddess Maat, Right—Truth and Justice; or again, the man's heart being weighed in the balance against the image of Maat, in the

presence of Osiris, while Horus is watching the dipping of the scales.

One of the chapters of the "Book of the Dead," is entitled: "Book of Entering into the Hall of the Twofold Maat (Right and Wrong); the person parts from his sins that he may see the divine faces." This one hundred and twenty-fifth chapter gives us the oldest known code of private and public morality. The dead man invokes the Eternal Righteousness as follows:

Hail to thee great god, lord of the Two-fold Maat. . . . I have brought you Law, and subdued for you iniquity. I am not a doer of fraud and iniquity against men. I am not a doer of that which is crooked. . . . I do not force a labouring man to do more than his daily task. . . . I do not cause hunger; I do not cause weeping. . . . I am not a falsifier of the measures in the temples. . . . I do not add to the weight of the scale; I do not falsify the indicator of the balance; I do not withhold milk from the mouth of the suckling.

Nor is it simply the negative aspect of morality which is thus presented as the test of the life of the hereafter, but the dead man is represented as proceeding to affirm the positive virtues which

are to be his defense before Maat. On the monumental inscriptions we read such noble testimonies of conscience in these ancient pagans as the following:

> I was just and true without malice, placing God in my heart and quick in discerning his will. I have come to the city of those who dwell in eternity. I have done good upon earth. . . . I am a Sahu who took pleasure in righteousness, conformably with the laws of the tribunal of the two-fold Right.

And again:

> Doing that which is Right and hating that which is Wrong, I was bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothes to the naked, a refuge to him that was in want; that which I did to him, the great God hath done to me.

It is needless to multiply illustrations from other religions. This fine blossom is seen in the bud in the hidden wisdom of all lands. The higher thought and life in all religions of antiquity affirmed less openly the same ethical faith as to the hereafter. It was to be the reaping of the harvest whose seed was sown in the conduct of life on earth. How this strenuous faith in the moral

character of the hereafter was nurtured in the souls of the masters of antiquity, it is needless for us to inquire. The moral nature of man once quickened and brought to the birth becomes the prophet of the hereafter. Conscience, the voice of God in the human spirit, is the revealer of the things to come. The communings of these lofty spirits with the unseen world taught them the secrets which the duller souls of their fellows could not have received. Could we bring to light the secret experiences of the great souls of the past, we should perhaps discover the truth which seems in our age almost bursting into an open secret concerning the relation of the seen to the unseen world. Suffice it to say that those mystic experiences of the saintly seers, untranslatable into the tongue of the people without creating a frightful danger, fed the consciousness of the reality of a life beyond, and instructed men in the essential laws of that life. These were the rapt experiences, couched in the half-revealing, half-concealing ritual of the mysteries, which kept alive in the souls of the common people a sense of the unseen world, and a faith that it is to bring the rewards

and punishments due to the virtue and vice of earth. Plato writes in one place:

> I must not omit to mention a tradition which is firmly believed by many, and has been received from those who are learned in the mysteries; they say that the crime will be punished in the world below.

The true nature of earth's experiences followed from this interpretation of man's origin, nature and destiny. The secret of the soul is found in the truth that the present life is a training for the future life, that earth is a discipline through which men are made ready by temptation and trial to escape hell and to gain heaven, so that the spirit may be reunited to God, its Source, through the new birth of death. Plato writes in one place of the Mysteries: "They redeem us from the pains of hell, but if we neglect them no one knows what awaits us." There seems to have been quite a unanimity among ancient writers to the effect that he who had been initiated, had learned what would insure his happiness hereafter. This salvation in the future life, assured through initiation, was not however

attained by mere ritualistic observances, by participation in these mystic sacraments of paganism; it was to be wrought in the soul on earth through painful purifications, as pictured in the sacred symbols which taught the initiate the true story of the soul.

One of the most remarkable forms of these ancient Mysteries was that known as Mithraicism. Little is known of this Persian cult until it appeared in Rome as a secret worship, about the beginning of the second century of our era. It spread so rapidly and won such popularity that, for awhile, it seemed likely to prove a serious rival to Christianity. From the fragmentary accounts preserved to us, we recognize in it the early Persian conception of life as a battle between good and evil, fashioned into symbolic forms and shrined in the elaborate ritual of a secret Order. Mithras was the god of the bright heaven, the god of Light. In the natural symbolism of religion, he was therefore the god of Purity and Goodness. The strife between Day and Night, between the Light and Darkness, was a physical parable of the strife between the powers of Good and Evil in the soul

of man. Mithras led the forces of purity and called men to the one great battle of earth beneath his standard. Victory in this battle was to be won only by sacrifice—the sacrifice which Mithras himself is always mystically performing in the heavens and in the soul of man. The human soul which sprang from the Divine being, as a ray of pure light, and descended into matter was again to reascend and attain unity with God through prolonged and severe asceticism. Those who were initiated in the mysteries of Mithraicism had to fast through a long probation, enduring scourging and fasting, and living in strictest celibacy. They were then counted as soldiers of Mithras, and sealed with his sign upon their foreheads—the mystic sign of the cross. Before entering upon each successive stage of the Order, the candidate was called upon to participate in contests which symbolized the everlasting battle between Light and Darkness; and, at the end of each renewed strife, the victor's crown was placed upon his brow. A beautiful natural symbolism of the true story of the soul!

The Eleusinian Mysteries had much of the

same character. The fundamental legend on which the ritual was founded was "the searching of the goddess Ceres for her daughter Proserpine, her sorrows and her joys, her descent into Hades and her return into the realm of light." A pure nature-myth apparently. Nature itself, however, is a cosmic symbol of spiritual realities, the story of the soul written as a hieroglyph in matter, the principles of ethics found in the lower terms of physics. Nature itself therefore is a sacrament—the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual truths. Such a tale as that of this nature-myth readily translated itself, in the minds of mystics, into a parable of man's life; the fall of the pure spirit from the upper worlds of light into the dark prison-house of matter, its defilement therein, its purification through suffering, the coming down of heavenly helpers to its aid, its restoration to the realms of light, its re-ascent to God. This was the spiritual truth shrined in the dramatic ritual of the Mysteries. The final stage in this sacramental drama, according to Thos. Taylor, pictured the spirit's "friendship and interior communion with God, and the enjoy-

ment of that felicity which arises from intimate converse with divine beings."

From what we can gather of these Mysteries, Eleusinian, Mithraic, Dionysian, Adonian, and probably those centering in the worship of Isis, the main features of these sacramental rituals were common to them all. The story of the soul was symbolically pictured in six successive stages, so strangely familiar to us, Baptism, Temptation, Passion, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension. The initiate himself, in the most solemn scene of the mystic drama, was sometimes encoffined as though for burial, and then raised to new life by the hand of the symbolized God. Or, the story of man was imaged in the story of the god whose experiences were followed, until in hymns, which formed the rough drafts of the very Easter Hymn which we still sing, the worshipers burst forth in the joyous acclaim of the risen god.

These were the truths shrined in the inner religion of antiquity: the unity of God, immortality as the natural consequence of character upon earth, the present life a training of the spiritual man in the life of the son of God. In Jesus of

Nazareth this twofold truth of the hidden wisdom of antiquity came forth into the light of day; the inner life of roots and stem stood revealed in the glory of the flower; and the secret of paganism became the open secret of Christianity. The one God worshiped dimly by antiquity has become "our Father which art in heaven," seen in the face of the Beloved Son. Immortality has been verily brought to light in the life of the man who walked in audible communings with the unseen world, and who gave the one needful attestation of a hereafter in his manifestation of himself after death from the spirit-sphere. That life to come is seen, through this open window of the skies, as the natural issue of the life that now is; unutterably blissful in its reward of noble character, and solemn beyond the dreams of superstition in its fruitage from vice and crime. The earth on which Jesus lived is verily the schoolhouse of the spirit, the scene of discipline through which man becomes regenerate, from which the child of earth mounts through temptation and trial by the way of the cross unto the destiny of the Son of God.

These are the staple truths of essential Christianity, our fundamental faiths. And these truths are but the shadows of the Christ himself—the reflections cast in our consciousness from the story of the Divine Man. Augustine said, long ago, that Jesus so lived that his life became a parable of the life of the soul. The sacraments and doctrines of the Christian Church are but symbols of that mystic life of the Christ, nor merely as of the story of an individual who lived eighteen centuries ago, but as the secret read in a mystic man of the universal story of the soul. The Christ is to be born in us and we are to become the sons of God; and then, through those six successive stages—Baptism, Temptation, Passion, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension—we are by the way of the cross to mount into the heavens and enjoy the beatific vision.

How strangely real becomes the familiar story which the Church brings to us at the Lenten time! How profoundly true to human nature this household faith in which, at our mother's knees, we learned all unconsciously the secret of the ages. How imperishable this one common faith of the

human spirit! How immortal this one constant religion of the soul of man! How shallow, in the light of such a vision of the hidden history of man, the scepticism which challenges this one essential, universal, eternal religion of earth; which, growing with the growth of man, from the inner roots of antiquity, has blossomed at last into the open secret of the soul—the Christ!

Knowing it not perhaps, we have entered into the heritage of the fathers; and the common belief of Christian men is the fulfilling of the innermost faith and hope and aspiration of universal humanity. No longer couched to us in the shadowy and confusing lines of a nature myth, but bodied in the clear, strong, true outlines of an historic character—behold the parable of the soul!

Are we following in the way the Fathers trod? Are we walking in the clear light of god, our Father in the heavens? Are our eyes raised to the splendid vision of immortality? Are we feeling round us the shadows of the unseen world? Are we in training on the earth for that life beyond? Are we disciplining our souls through trial and temptation, and fashioning thus the manhood which

endures beyond the grave? Are we turning that mystic ritual of antiquity into the severe realities of life, and, through the six stages of the regenerate man, are we by the way of the cross going toward the stars? Can we each say: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

There is an historic poem which has well been called "one of the most earnest utterances of antiquity"; a poem which has a strange pathetic interest for us as the last voice of the sacred oracle of Delphos. As Christianity arose gathering into itself the spiritual forces of the past, speaking to men as with a fresh voice out of the unseen world, the old channels of communication between earth and the spirit spheres ceased to pour forth messages of counsel and cheer, and the voice of the sacred oracles of paganism grew dumb. A disciple of the great Plotinus—one of the rarest mystics of the ages—sought through the Delphian oracle an answer to the question: "Where is now Plotinus' soul?" The answer which came, the last whisper of the Oracle, ran thus:

> Pure spirit—once a man—pure spirits now
> Greet thee rejoicing, and of these art thou;

Not vainly was thy whole soul alway bent,
With one same battle and one same intent,
Through eddying cloud and earth's bewildering roar,
To win her bright way to that stainless shore.
Ay, mid the salt spume of this troublous sea,
This death in life, this sick perplexity,
Oft on thy struggle through the obscure unrest
A revelation opened from the Blest—
Showed close at hand the goal thy hope would win,
Heaven's kingdom round thee and thy God within.
So sure a help the eternal Guardians gave,
From life's confusion so were strong to save,
Upheld thy wandering steps that sought the day
And set them steadfast on the heavenly way.
Nor quite even here on thy broad brows was shed
The sleep which shrouds the living, who are dead;
Once by God's grace was from thine eyes unfurled
This veil that screens the immense and whirling world.
Once, while the spheres round thee in music ran,
Was very Beauty manifest to man;
Ah, once to have seen her, once to have known her there,
For speech too sweet, for earth too heavenly fair!
But now the tomb where long thy soul had lain
Bursts, and thy tabernacle is rent in twain;
Now from about thee, in thy new home above,
Has perished all but life, and all but love,
And on all lives and on all loves outpoured
Free grace and full, a Spirit from the Lord,
High in that heaven whose windless vaults enfold

Just men made perfect, and an age all gold.
Thine own Pythagoras is with thee there,
And sacred Plato in that sacred air,
And whoso followed, and all high hearts that knew
In death's despite what deathless Love can do.
To God's right hand they have scaled the starry way—
Pure spirits these, thy spirit pure as they.
Ah, saint! how many and many an anguish past,
To how fair haven art thou come at last!
On thy meek head what Powers their blessing pour,
Filled full with life, and rich for evermore!

VI

RELIGION AND RELIGIONS

Francis Bacon said: "Religion being the chief bond of human society, it is a happy thing when itself is well contained within the bond of unity."

The tree, starting from a seed, has unity in its source. Growing through trunk and branches and twigs and leaves, it develops varied forms and functions, as expressions of its life; the life which ever remains one in the common sap flowing through every part of the common organism. The whole complex life of the tree strains through this rich variety towards the flower and the fruit, into which every member of the organism distils its essential life; and lo! there is again a oneness.

Religion, viewed from the human standpoint, as an expression of man's spiritual life, is his effort for the adjustment of his life with the Cosmic Power; his thought of that Power, his feeling

towards It and his conduct under It. Religion, viewed as the life of the Cosmic Power manifesting itself in the life of man, is God's self-communication to the soul of man; His guidance of man's thought into a knowledge of Himself (theology), His messages to the mind of man (revelation), His stirring of man's feelings into aspiration for the divine life (inspiration), His direction of man's conduct into character (ethics). In either aspect religion is one in its source, its inner nature, its end and aim; one in the oneness of our human nature, the oneness of the divine nature, the oneness together of these natures of God and man. But, as an expression of the life of man who is himself in a process of growth, and as an expression of the life of God who is amid the processes of self-unfolding, religion must, between the seed and the flower, differentiate itself into the rich variety of forms and functionings which we behold in the manifold religions of earth; differing in its phases with the different stages of man's growth, the different environments of the many lands of earth, the different civilizations of history. Each of these religions, however, proves itself to a

scientific study an expression of some necessary phase of religion; each subserves a use in the evolution of the fruitioning religion of humanity; each will find its permanent value preserved and its transient uses discarded in the attained unity of the flowering soul of man.

There can be no dispute concerning the oneness of the source of religion, viewed either in its human or its divine aspect. My aim is to suggest hints of the essential unity of religion even now underlying all religions, and the ultimate oneness toward which all religions are forthreaching.

The religions of Christendom resolve themselves into varieties of the one Christian Religion. Between the most uncommon of the sects of the Western world there is found that which Dean Stanley was wont to call our "common Christianity"—the essential Christian elements. This is to be seen alike in the Institutions, the Worships, the Beliefs and the Life of Christendom.

What is true between the different churches of Christianity is true also between Christianity and other religions. Is man one in nature the world

over; the human race, despite all its vast variations, one *genus homo;* the blood coursing in the veins of Asiatics, Europeans, Africans and Americans the same sacred ichor—as by all our scientific research is proving to be the fact? Then is real religion one, wherever, in the differing religions of earth, the soul of man, seeking to adjust itself to its cosmic relationships—to know its cosmic source, to obey its cosmic law, to reach its cosmic goal—looks up to God in hope and trust, looks out to man in love. The religions of men are many; the religion of man is one. Vary as religions may and must under varying environments and heredities, through the varying temperaments of different races and the varying stages of the growth of man; emphasizing, as each must needs do, the peculiar phase of the divine life imaged in each of these differing human mirrors; marked, as each necessarily is, by the errors which are the shadows of these partial truths, yet are all but variations of the one true religion, the life of God in the soul of man.

So we find that the Institutions and Worships, the Beliefs and the Life which are common to the

different Christian churches, are common, also, to the different religions of humanity. Epitomizing our findings under these four heads, we have the following premises for our argument for catholicity:

Religion develops the same great *Institutions* in different lands and ages, which the varying religions of men vary indefinitely.

The Church, spelled with a capital C, was an institution of Chaldea, India and Egypt, millenniums ago, as it is of Italy and England and America, to-day. The Buddhist felt toward his "order" much as the Romanist feels towards his church. A sacred ministry, a class of men set apart for the divine offices of religion, would have been found of old in Babylon and Thebes, as it is found now in Paris and London. The Pagan Temple was the Christian Basilica and Cathedral, baptized with another name. The altar stood in the sacred spot of the heathen temple, as it stands in the holy place of the Christian minster. Monasticism developed in the East long before it arose in the West. Monks and nuns and hermits would have been found along the Nile valley ages before

Christendom poured its host of sad-souled ascetics up the sacred river, peopling the hills for thousands of miles. A solution of the problem finds in these resemblances hints of the oneness of religion, generating the same sacred institutions among different religions.

The natural symbolism of washing had suggested itself to pious souls of many lands, and other religions than Christianity had their own sacred lustrations. The distinctive form of sacred washing which Christianity inherits from the Jewish John had grown into use in widely differing religions, as a rite of initiation into the divine life, the symbol of renunciation of the past, the sign of self-purification, the sacrament of the divine forgiveness of sins. India had its well recognized baptism. Dean Alford's noble baptismal hymn might have been sung over the confessors of the faith by the Ganges, as by the Thames. Mithraicism had a similar ceremony, as had also the mysteries of Greece and of other lands. The Christian Church holds its prized baptism as a trustee for humanity, whose sacred possession it is—the sacrament for the opening of the one

spiritual life of the children of the one God in all lands and under all religions.

The Lord's Supper, by general tradition instituted by Jesus himself, was an outgrowth of the Jewish Passover Supper. As it is observed in the two greatest churches of Christendom, it is far from the original institution, the simple memorial meal of Jesus; far, also, from the early Christian rite, the love-feast of primitive Christianity. And the difference between the mass of the Church of Rome and the eucharist of the Greek Church, on the one hand, and the love-feast of primitive Christianity and the memorial meal of Jesus, on the other hand, admeasures the inflowings from the surrounding pagan environment of early Christianity.

The ancestry of the Mass is to be found in the Mysteries of Mithraicism and Greece, as well as in the Passover of Judaism. It is the child of Isis, as of Jehovah. The sacred mysteries of different lands, those esoteric ethical and spiritual cults so widely scattered among the religions of antiquity, observed a sacred meal as a symbol of man's communion with God—the outward and visible

sign of the inward and spiritual grace whereby man doth partake of the very life of God, and doth nourish his being into holiness by eating of the bread which "cometh down from heaven," by drinking the wine which "maketh glad the heart of man," whose natural symbols are in the wheat and the grape, the choicest fruitings of the indwelling life of nature. Bread and wine were distributed to the worshipers and eaten and drunk in reverence, with prayer and praise. Curiously, again, the Mass even preserves the ancient Pagan form of the sacred bread—the unleavened wafer still to be seen on the patten upon the altar.

All this was natural and inevitable in the sacramental system of nature, through which a law of correspondence runs; causing every form of life to be a type, a shadow of a higher form of life; making the fundamental function of feeding, whereby life is conserved and increased, a symbol of the functioning of the soul for the maintenance and development of spiritual life, the growth in grace of the spirit of man by assimilating the thoughts of the divine mind and converting them

into character. The Christian Mass is the highest dramatization of the mysteries of the soul—a dramatization rehearsed centuries ago upon the banks of the Euphrates, the Cephissus and the Orontes. This is the glory, not the shame, of Christianity, proving it the flowering forth of the various religions of antiquity, whose best life, strained into it, reappears in it.

In *Worship* all religions prove themselves akin. The sacred symbolisms through which art ministers to worship meet us in the temples of Paganism as in the churches of Christendom. The circle, the triangle and the trefoil were graven by Pagan chisels on the walls of the buildings reared by religions which thought of themselves only as aliens and foes one to the other. For the unity of God, signed by the circle and the triunity, the oneness in variety of God, signed by the triangle and the trefoil, were truths known to no one religion alone, shared by all great religions in the same stage of evolution. The cross, which forms the most sacred symbol of our Christian churches, painted above the altar, shining in brass from the altar itself, flashing from the top of the lofty

steeple—this same cross would have been found in the temples of well-nigh every religion of the past, as its most sacred symbol. Even the sacred buildings themselves were often constructed on the cruciform plan. The sleeping-places of the dead were hallowed by the same sign which consecrates our "acres of God"; and stone and brass crosses cast their shadows over the graves of Pagans, as of Christians. The cross was to those heathen, as to us Christians, the sacred sign of life; of the life of man in the human body; of the life of man escaping from the body and rising through death into immortality; of human life accepting the law of sacrifice under which the superior souls of earth devote themselves to the saving of their fellows; of the life of God Himself, in which all these mysteries of our human life find their source and spring, their ground and aim. It was the symbol of the cosmic mystery which the Christian seer beheld, when he saw "in the midst of the throne as it were a lamb slain from the foundation of the world"; the cosmic mystery which the Pagan seers beheld when they fashioned that strangest symbol of antiquity,

found in many a land, within many a religion—a crucified Saviour hanging in the skies; the truth now forever sacred to man, since the supreme Son of Man died upon the cross of Calvary, embodying once for all the cosmic mystery in the human life divine.

If we turn to the inmost heart of worship, it is to find that, as in religious symbolism, so in the essential life of the soul, under the many religions of men there is one religion of man. Every religion, as it has grown, has grown out of rite into reverence, out of ceremony into character, out of the prescribed performances of priestly piety into the prayer and praise which are the very soul of true worship. Each may have begun in the rituals of superstitious fear which are recorded alike in the Levitical legislation, the institutions of Manu and the ceremonial codes of Chaldea; but all have evolved into the pure passion of the soul, forever sacred to man in the litanies of Accadia, the psalms of the Old Testament, the metrical prayers of the Vedas, the lofty aspirations of the Upanishads, the devout worship of the hymn of Cleanthes and the calm

meditations of Marcus Aurelius. Prayer and praise form the efflorescence of Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and the many religions of Egypt, as of Christianity. When the Mohammedan worships, he kneels upon his mat and prays, as does the Christian. Different as the outer forms of human prayers may be, their inner substance is one—the desire for the knowledge of God, the hunger for the life of God, the longing for the forgiveness of sins and peace with God, the realization of the oneness of man with his source and spring. Today, when we would enkindle our souls in public worship, we Christians open the ancient Jewish psalter, and are fain to pray and praise in the words written centuries ago under the shadows of the temple of Zion, or by the waters of Babylon. And when we Christians would retire into the sacred place of our being, and, shutting the door of the senses, would be alone with God, how often do we find the priest for this silent worship in some ancient heathen, whose soul-communings are immortalized in the poem or the prayer which makes our anthologies of religion so precious to us —the companion of our closet proving not merely

the Christian Augustine and À Kempis, but the Pagan Epictetus and Plato.

On the surface of the subject, the *Beliefs* of men seem bewilderingly manifold, hopelessly discordant. How many the faiths for which religions have fought! How contradictory religious beliefs one of another! What possible ground of unity can be found for religions as dissimilar as Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and the various cults of Egypt, of Greece and of Rome? Is not the *raison d'être* of each great religion, in a science of comparative religion, to be found in the affirmation of some truth or truths not held by other systems? Must not each great religion, therefore, be dissonant with all other great religions; the more positive its affirmation the more strident its discord in the Babel voices of the soul? Does, then, the flute or the violin or the clarionet merely make a discord in the cacophony of the orchestra? Does not the master of music blend these variant cries of the instruments into a symphony? "The symphony of religions," Cudworth's great word long prior to our own Higginson, is a phrase as scientifically true as it is

poetically fine. As "the golden tides" of the music of the soul beat around the throne of God, all the discords of religions harmonize in the concord of religion, each truth for which men have struggled finding its complement in some other truth against which they have struggled, God thus fulfilling Himself in many ways.

But there is a unity deeper than the oneness of harmony in the variant voices of the soul. All great religions pass through one general course of evolution. In the same stages of development, all alike will bring forth, as the same institutions and worships, so also the same beliefs. Arrange these different religions synchronously, in respect to their evolution, and the same ideas will be found in all, more or less modified. As they grow, they grow together; over all differences of environment and heredity, the forces of the common life of man asserting the oneness which exists under black skins and yellow, red skins and white. In their higher reaches they strain towards each other. The flowering of all beliefs is in one faith —all religions seeding down one religion. So, beneath the variant and discordant beliefs of the

present the germs of the future universal religion can even now be traced. The Cambridge School of Platonists divined this long ago; but how could their fine voices make themselves heard against the raucous cries of the age of Cromwell and Laud? A generation or more before our day, a few widely read but not scholarly trained thinkers caught sight of this same vision, and laboriously spread the unwelcome tokens of it before an unsympathetic age; earning for themselves the ill odor which still clings to the names of Godfrey and Higgins and their ilk. In our own day, the talented and conservative Presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church, a devoted High-Churchman and an open-minded student, through his researches in sacred symbolism gained glimpses of this truth; which so fascinated him that he pursued the clue found unwittingly in his hands, until he laid before his Church the results of his studies in the noble volume entitled "Monumental Religion." In this epoch-marking work, Dr. Lundy, accepting the Apostles' Creed as the norm and type of all creeds, traced, clause by clause, the parallelisms which he had discovered in other religions; showing that

every article in this creed found its counterpart in the various systems of Paganism. As a consequence, this creed appeared, in a sense utterly dwarfing the timid conceptions of the traditional churchman, a Catholic Creed, a form of faith confessed by men of all lands and ages—the symbol of Universal Religion. Dr. Lundy might have meant only to exalt the creed of Christendom; he succeeded in revealing the creed of Humanity.

The supreme religious functioning resumes the experience of every lower activity, and in the *Life* which is the end and aim of institutions and worships and beliefs, we see again that, though there are many religions, there is one religion.

As each great religion evolves, it evolves towards character and conduct, confessing that its heart's blood is ethical, that it *is* in order to grow a soul. In its lower and rudimentary forms it may anywhere be unmoral, or even immoral; expressing thus the immature development of human nature in the land and age, manifesting the degeneracy back into which life ever tends to slip, as the propulsive forces of evolution for a period fail; but, in its highest reaches, it is everywhere a

movement towards the awed recognition of God as the Power Making for Righteousness, and towards the attainment of righteousness as the true communion of man with God. Every religion, in growing, becomes ethical and spiritual. All religions are at one in the ideals before them, in the goal towards which they strive. The ethical and spiritual life, which is the common fruitioning of all religions, is not one thing in one religion and another thing in another religion. There is no real discord between the ethics of Buddhism and Confucianism and the religions of Greece and Rome, no essential difference between the spirituality of the Hindu and Persian and the Egyptian, save as each naturally shows the different coloring of race and environment upon the face of the same soul. The ethical and spiritual life of all these varieties of Paganism is one and the same ethical and spiritual life which tides the soul of the Christian.

The ideals of character vary in varying lands, but only as the refractions of the same light falling in different angles on the same prism will vary. It is one and the same light of life through all the

variations of the spectrum. The human ideals are one everywhere. Purity and Justice and Truth and Temperance and Charity—these need no translation from the speech of the Pagan to the tongue of the Christian. There is no Hindu purity, no Buddhist renunciation, no Chinese temperance, no Grecian justice, no Persian truthfulness. The flora and fauna of the human soul are one wherever humanity is found. Every ethical force correlates into every other ethical force. Goodness knows no native soil. Virtue is at home in every land. The Ten Commandments form the law of Egypt and of Persia as of Christendom. The Golden Rule proves the rule of Hindu and Chinaman, as of the Christian. It waited not for Jesus to reveal it. The spirit of the Christ had already revealed it through Jewish Hillel and Chinese Confucius and the great spirits of well-nigh every land. The Beatitudes exigently call upon the Buddhist as upon the Christian, "*Sursum corda.*" Saints are of blood kin the world over.

There is nothing alien to the truly devout Christian in the devoutness of the Hindu Guru, or

of the yellow-robed saint of Japan, or of the mystic worshiper among the Iranian mountains. When the soul of man fronts the Infinite and Eternal Spirit, beneath the bo tree of India or amid the rugged fastnesses of Thibet or in the cloisters of the Christian abbey, it is one and the same God who is seen. Wherever we overhear the communings of a soul with God, we hear in our own tongue. In the presence of the man of the spirit, be his name what it may, we know that he is of our family and household of God. Is it anything to us that Plotinus just missed being a Christian, as we hearken to this his meditation?

So let the soul that is not unworthy of that Vision contemplate the Great Soul; freed from deceit and witchery and collected into calm. Calmed be the body for her in that hour, and the tumult of the flesh; ay, all that is about her calm; calm be the earth, the sea, the air, and let Heaven itself be still. Then let her feel how into that silent Heaven the Great Soul floweth in. . . . And so may man's soul be sure of Vision, when suddenly she is filled with light; for this light is from Him, and is He; and then surely shall we know His presence, when, like a god of old time, He

enters into the house of one that calleth Him and maketh it full of light. And how may this thing be for us? Let all else go.

One religion —many religions. One source and spring of real religion everywhere, in all ages, though many courses through which it flows; ontaking different flavors and colors from different soils, and becoming many different religions; now poisoning itself in the miasmic marches of superstitious ignorance, now becoming foul and fetid from the discharge into it of the *cloaca* through which man's brutal lusts and evil passions and cruel hatreds empty themselves; again purifying itself under the free winds of heaven and beneath the rays of that Sun of Righteousness ever rising over earth "with healing in its wings."

One inner essence, therefore, within all the bewilderingly variant forms which religion assumes, in different lands and in different times; as man faces one and the same universe, finds one and the same problems to solve, hears within him one and the same mystic voice of the soul, sees behind him one and the same origin, visions before him one and the same destiny, discerns over him one

and the same law of life, recognizes in himself one and the same order of evolution for the spiritual life of man everywhere, through which it mounts by one and the same series of stages, under all variations of race, so that the same institutions, worships, beliefs and life appear in different religions at the same period of development.

One glorious burgeoning and blossoming of religion in all climes, one ideal of human life divine rising above the souls of all the loftily striving sons of men of every blood, one secret of cosmic consciousness opening within the spirits of the wise and the good in all countries, one life of fellowship with man and communion with God as the end and aim of religion throughout the ages; in whose blessedness all earnest and devout souls, when illumined, do recognize each other as the children together of the All Father.

This is the epiphany, or manifestation of God in man, which is now rising over our earth; that earth on which, through the centuries, men have differed from each other, not so much in their politics or economics as in their religions; have fought each other, not so bitterly for the possession

of lands and the control of trade, as for the maintenance of a monopoly of religion; being held apart in mutual animosities, persecutions and wars by the very gift of God which should have been their bond of peace. Thank God for the vision of our day, in which, while we still stand apart in our different religions, as befits our different heredities and environments, our varying traditions and temperaments, we know that, under these religions many, there lives one religion—the life of God in the soul of man.

In the recognition of this revelation of our age—the revelation coming to us at the hands of the suspected angels whom we call Science, Comparative Religion, the Higher Criticism and a host of other spirits of bad repute in the heaven of the churches—in the recognition of this revelation, we become conscious of the shame and sin of the divisions which break up Christendom into sects and denominations, not as the natural groupings of spiritual affinities, freely interchanging and co-operating to mutual advantage, but as the unnaturally attempted monopolizations of the truth and the life which are the common heritage of the

children of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the light of this truth, we see the folly and the wickedness of the standing apart from one another which emphasizes the minor matters on which we differ, rather than the essential matters on which we are at one; which makes the note of a standing or a falling church the possession of the accidents rather than of the substance of real religion, the body, not the soul, of the child of God; which places on the green of our New England villages a row of competing churches, each one half-starved, with a poorly paid parson and a poorly equipped plant, and which turns the energies of the struggling churches of our great cities into all sorts of wretched devices for making both ends meet, and for filling the empty places in the needlessly duplicated buildings, mechanicalizing, materializing and mammonizing the religion ostensibly served; which leaves the business world to learn the secret of success in concentration and co-operation, reserving for the supreme institution of humanity—the Church—to blunder along in the obsolete methods of an outworn civilization, a survival of competition in the age of the trust.

The first moral of the truth that religions are many while religion is one should set our Christian churches to pray that prayer of their dying master —"that they all may be one"; to pray it as men who can themselves bring down the answer from God, whenever they will to know their oneness in Him and to live it forth.

In the recognition of the truth that there are many religions but one religion, we open our eyes to the folly and the crime of the present attitude of Christendom to the other great religions of earth; the folly and the crime which effectually neutralize the heroic efforts of our foreign missionary work. The East India treaty of 1813 contained the following paragraph, known as "The Missionaries' Charter." It reads thus:

> Whereas it is the duty of this country (England) to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions, and such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge and of religion and moral improvement.

The "*introduction of religion!*" There had been, then, no religion in the land which had

produced little else but religions! There were, then, no plants of the Heavenly Father's planting in the soil of India, no life of God in the soul of the Hindu, no feeling after God by his children in Bengal and the Punjab, no graces of the spirit grown in the lives of the children of Madras and Bombay, no virtues blossoming forth in the saints meditating by the shores of the Indus and the Jumna!

We still go to India to introduce religion, and then wonder that we get no warmer welcome and achieve no greater results. Could we but go thither to recognize the reality of the religion growing there in such rank fertility; to say after Paul—"Ye men of Benares, we perceive that in all things ye are very religious"; to confess the truths held and the life lived there as of God; humbly to learn from the seers of India what they have to teach us; and then, finding them thus made ready to receive from us what we have to teach them, to bring to them the story of the Divine Man whose truth and life we hold in trust for the world, bidding them find in Him what they need of truth, what they lack of life—how different

our foreign missionary work would be! The first step to a successful foreign missionary work is honestly to face the truth of the topic now before us, religion and religions—one religion under many religions.

There came a letter a while ago from a young minister who had been engaged for two or three years in foreign missionary work in the East. It was a frank and manly letter, breathing throughout the surprise and consternation of an honest soul who had gone upon his work believing that Christianity held a monopoly of true religion, and that he was to displace the false religions of the East by introducing religion; the confession of an honest soul who, in the face of the real religiousness of India, of the truths held there and the life lived there, had awakened with a start to realize that "in every land he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him"; that "that was the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world"; and that we who have seen the "great sheet let down from heaven are thenceforth to call nothing common or unclean."

He was coming back, so he wrote, to take up the study of Sanskrit, that he might master the sources of Hinduism at first hand, and thus prepare himself, humbly and wisely, to go back with a living message to the living children of the living God.

VII

THE LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

An enthusiastic cross-country rider has said that the *raison d'être* for fences is that they may be taken gaily, on the broad back of a great hunter, as the hounds give tongue and the huntsman's horn is heard.

To a "meet" of souls we gather, quite conscious that in the world spiritual fences do, alas, exist, but joyously feeling that their truest utility is that they call us to the heartening sport of taking them easily; thus to find the fields of the ecclesiastical small farmers proving the broad and breezy commons of the free men of the spirit.

Fences have their uses in the world material. In the crude stages of social evolution they are needed to keep cows out, and corn in. But the waste of them, the labor spent on them, and the money sunk in the ground with them! In due process of

social evolution a community arrives at the stage where cows can be kept off the public roads; and, neighbors learning to get along without robbing each other's hen roosts and cribbing each other's cabbages, it seems to all together that fences are not things of beauty, and thus need not be joylessnesses forever;—and, having had their day, they cease to be.

In the world spiritual fences doubtless fulfill a need of the primitive man. Creeds keep heretical bulls of Bashan out of the green pastures of the saints. Institutions shelter the grain that the sower, going forth to sow, scatters on the human heart—so that it may live and thrive.

As Maurice truly said, a creed secures the mental tranquillity in which the spiritual life may unfold. It offers a crystallizing point around which the character may form. And, as many men have discovered, institutions serve as the bark, protecting the sap of the tree which the Lord hath planted. But fences grow no crops. No wheat of God ripens on the stone walls which religion rears. And oh! the waste of them! The money squandered on them that might have gone into

breadstuffs! The years of men spent in building them and keeping them in order! Years which might have gone into the productive labor whereby two blades of spiritual grass should grow where one grew before.

And so, sooner or later, the time must come in the soul-world when the folly of fence-building must be seen, when the waste of it must be felt; and fences shall fall into decay that our fields may yield a wider harvest. Sooner or later, the day must dawn when the enthusiasm which has spent itself on the staking out of the claims of rival religions, and on the armed watch over them, shall turn into the sane and sensible spiritual labor of a co-operative commonwealth of souls; when a common system of irrigation shall provide conduits for the water of life flowing forth from beneath the throne of God, so that the most arid spot of our dead lands, social, industrial and political, shall blossom as the rose.

So to our happy work of taking fences!

The limits of religious fellowship are the limits of religion. According to our conception of religion, will be our conception of its fellowship.

Religion itself is a growth. Like all the other phases of human life, it is subject to the processes of evolution. It is ever widening with the widening range of human life. With this expansion the limits of its fellowship expand.

As far back, perhaps, as we can trace the story of man religiously, the family was the nucleating center of religion. Religion was a family bond, because it was a family rite. Marco Bozzaris was a favorite hero of my boyhood. I loved to declaim his famous—"Strike for your altars and your fires!" Wholly unconscious was I then of the interesting bit of history embalmed in those words. In the house of every Greek and Roman was an altar. On this altar there were always a few lighted coals. It was a sacred obligation for the master of every house to keep the fire up, night and day. Woe to the house where it was extinguished! The fire ceased to glow upon the altar only when the entire family had perished. An extinguished hearth, an extinguished family, were synonymous expressions among the ancients. It is evident that this duty of keeping fire always upon an altar was connected with an ancient belief. It

was not permitted to feed this fire with every sort of wood. Religion distinguished among trees those that could be employed for this use from those which it would be impiety to make such use of. The fire was something divine. The family adored it, and presented to it offerings of whatever was believed to be agreeable to a god. The sacred fire was the providence of the family. The meals cooked upon it were sacredly used. They were religious rites. Every meal was then a lesser sacrament. The Lares and Penates were the gods of the home. There was a "household church."

As the religion of these primitive ages was exclusively domestic, so also were its morals. Religion did not say to a man, showing him another man: That is thy brother. It said to him: That is a stranger. He cannot participate in the religious rites of thy hearth. He cannot approach the tomb of thy family. He has other gods than thine, and cannot unite with thee in a common prayer. Thy gods reject his adoration and regard him as an enemy. He is thy foe also. In this religion of the hearth man never supplicated a divinity in favor

of other men; he invoked him only for himself and his. A Greek proverb has remained as a memento of this ancient isolation of family prayer. In Plutarch's time they still said to the egotist: You sacrifice to the hearth. That is to say, you separate yourself from other citizens; you have no friends; your fellowmen are nothing to you; you live solely for yourself and yours. This proverb pointed to a time when all religion, housing around the hearth, the horizon of morals and of affection, had not yet passed beyond the narrow circle of the family.[1]

So with the wider groupings of men. When several families formed into a tribe, there became a tribal religion, a tribal god. Jehovah was the tribal god of Beni-Israel, the sons of Israel. He belonged to them; they belonged to him. All who were the children of the common father, Israel, were brothers one to the other, had a right to partake in the common religion. All outside the rites of the Beni-Israel were aliens, strangers and enemies. There could be no religious fellowship beyond the religious bond of the tribe.

[1] *The Ancient City*, Coulanger, page 124 ff.

Thus, as the groupings yet further enlarged, and the gens or tribe passed on into the city, there became a religion of the city. Religion was a civic function, a civic bond. Plato's dream-city held its election in its temple. We hold ours in or near the saloon. Religious fellowship was bounded by the walls of the city. So were moral obligations.

When cities drew together into a state, all who were members of the same nation were included in the state religion; had one and the same religious rites and recognized a religious fellowship.

Outside the state there were only strangers, aliens, enemies. The limits of religious fellowship were drawn by the boundaries of the nation. Over the river which separated two peoples, no bridge of religious sympathy spanned. This may give us a hint as to that singular fact of the apotheosis of the Roman emperors. The Roman emperor was the head of the state, and as such he was the crown of its religion, its embodiment and personification. Therefore he was divine and to be worshiped. Therefore, again, to cut aloof from the religion of the state, to refuse to worship the Emperor, was to pass beyond the bonds of religious fellowship, and

so of social fellowship. Such refusal pronounced one an alien, a stranger and an enemy. This was the cause of the condemnation of the early Christians. Because of this they were judged to have no religion, to be "atheists."

When Christianity arose upon the ruins of the Roman Empire, it was a new, world-wide organization—a new imperial state. The nations and races of earth were drawn together into a new and higher unity—the unity of mankind. A blood-bond was found, uniting Jew and Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free. "God hath made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the earth." It embodied, therefore, a universal religion. The limits of its fellowship should, then, have been the limits of mankind. But the time had not come for such a conception of universal religion. From the beginning, the Church proceeded to divide itself into infinitesimal sections, schools, parties, sects, churches. These have continued, varying, but ever renewing themselves, down to the present day. There are no less than three hundred and fifty sects in Christendom. Each of these divisions of Christianity is centered around some one

special feature of Christianity. Here it is a belief which dominates the mind of man and becomes a synonym for Christianity. There it is a rite which is deemed to be the very essence of the Christian religion. A creed or an institution is the foundation stone of each sect, each denomination, each church of Christendom.

Theoretically, there is no denial of the truth that the fundamentals of Christianity are beliefs which are held in common among all Christians. Practically there is a denial of this truth. The very fact of the existence of the sect implies that there is something more important than our "common Christianity," viz., our peculiar and private Christianity. It is all very well to love and hope and believe, but the prime thing is to observe our ordinance, to maintain our dogma. The creed, the institution, becomes unconsciously the dominant factor of our peculiar brand of Christianity.

This may seem a hard saying, but it is true of all of us alike. I may speak freely of my own church, —which, despite its grave faults, I well love. Why should we Episcopalians separate ourselves from all other branches of Christendom, declining to

allow their ministers to officiate in our pulpits or to minister at our altars,—except that we believe a something vital inheres in the Apostolic order of the Church? The Apostolic Succession is then essential to a true Church. It constitutes the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ*—the article of a standing or a falling church. It differentiates the divine organism from the amorphous societies falsely called churches. As with one church, so with all churches—though I desire not the invidious task of further illustration.

No sect realizes this sectarianness of its belief. God thus mercifully pardons us all, and the Christ therefore bears with us all, sighing again: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" But the very fact that we are separated as Episcopalians and Baptists and Methodists and Presbyterians, really affirms that the one important thing in Christianity, according to our several conceptions, is that which constitutes Episcopalianism, or the Baptist church, or Presbyterianism or the Methodist church. The limits of religion, then, ought to be drawn around the Episcopal church, the Methodist church, the Baptist church or the

Presbyterian church. We may not naïvely ask, as the child asked its mother—"Is God a Presbyterian?" We may not picture God, after the fashion of certain mediæval artists, as a divine pope. But we all believe what comes perilously close to such a childish conception.

What, then, is religion, as in the evolution of the soul of man we now see it? I essay no philosophic definition of religion. I am content with certain ancient and simple definitions known to all "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." "What doth the Lord, thy God require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." "If we walk in the light, as

he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood (that is the life) of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

These are the venerable and sacred definitions of religion, honored by Christendom, however neglected by it. By these definitions of religion, and by these alone, may we draw the limits of religious fellowship. This is not sentiment, spiritual intuition, spiritual prophecy. These great words depict the true reality of religion. Wherever, then, is found a man living the Golden Rule, walking in the Spirit, loving God and loving man, dealing justly, showing mercy and walking humbly before God, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, keeping himself unspotted from the world; wherever is found a man thus living ethically and spiritually, there is found a religious man, there is to be recognized the presence of religion, and there is to be felt the bonds of a man, the including limits of religious fellowship.

Instead of discussing this theme abstractly, illustrate it concretely, since religion, after all, is a concrete matter, the life of the human soul.

Take the stories of two men widely separated

from each other, and as widely separated from all who foregather in America to discuss Christian unity, and judge whether the limits of our religious fellowship embrace them.

The spirit of one is embodied in a little book entitled—"The Practice of the Presence of God, the Best Rule of the Holy Life." A friend reports him as speaking thus in conversation with his friends:

> That he had always been governed by love without selfish views; and that, having resolved to make the love of God the end of all his actions, he had found reasons to be well satisfied with his method. That he was pleased when he could take up a straw from the ground for the love of God, seeking him only and nothing else, not even his gifts. . . . That he had long been troubled in mind from a certain belief that he should be damned; that all the men in the world could not have persuaded him to the contrary; but that he had thus reasoned with himself about it: "I engaged in a religious life only for the love of God, and I have endeavored to act only for him; whatever becomes of me, whether I be lost or saved, I will always continue to act purely for the love of God. I shall have this good at least, that till death I shall have done all that is in me to love him." That this trouble of mind had lasted for four years, during

which time he had suffered much, but that at last he had seen that this trouble arose from want of faith; and that since then he had passed his life in perfect liberty and continual joy. . . . That when an occasion of practicing some virtue offered, he addressed himself to God, saying, "Lord, I cannot do this unless thou enablest me"; and that then he received strength more than sufficient. That when he had failed in his duty he only confessed his fault saying to God, "I shall never do otherwise, if you leave me to myself. It is you who must hinder my falling, and mend what is amiss." That after this he gave himself no further uneasiness about it. . . . That with him the set times of prayers were not different from other times; that he retired to prayer according to the directions of his superior, but that he did not want such retirement, nor ask for it, because his greatest business did not divert him from God. . . . That all bodily mortifications and other exercises are useless, except as they serve to arrive at the union with God by love; that he had well considered this and found it the shortest way to go straight to him by continual exercise of love, and doing all things for his sake. . . . That the foundation of the spiritual life in him had been a high notion and esteem of God in faith, which, when he had well conceived, he had no other care at first but faithfully to reject every other thought that he might perform all his actions for the love of God. That when sometimes he had not thought of God for a good while

he did not disquiet himself for it, but, after having acknowledged his wretchedness to God, he returned to him with so much the greater trust in him as he had found himself wretched through forgetting him. . . . That there needed neither art nor science for going to God, but only a heart resolutely determined to apply itself to nothing but him, or for his sake, and to love him only. That all consists in one hearty renunciation of everything which we are sensible does not lead to God; that we might accustom ourselves to continual conversation with him with freedom and in simplicity. . . . That the whole substance of religion was faith, hope and charity, by the practice of which we become united to the will of God; that all besides is indifferent, and to be used as a means that we may arrive at our end and be swallowed up therein by faith and charity.

His example was a stronger inducement than any arguments he could propose. His very countenance was edifying, such a sweet and calm devotion appearing in it as could not but affect the beholders. And it was observed that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen (he was a cook) he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty, nor loitering, but did each thing in its season, with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquillity of spirit. "The time of business," said he, "does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, when several persons are at the same time calling

for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the blessed sacrament."

These quotations are taken from the records of one Nicholas Herman, of Lorraine, a lowly and unlettered man, who, after having been a footman and soldier, was admitted a lay brother among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris in 1666, and was afterwards known as "Brother Lawrence." Surely this man walked with God, manifesting every sign and token of the spiritual life which is the flower and fruit of religion. In him truly was "pure religion and undefiled." The limits of religious fellowship—must they, then, not include him?

What though he were a Roman Catholic and others of us are staunch Protestants? We must either deny to him essential religion, or confess that we ourselves fail in true religion, or else sweep him into our arms in the fellowship of souls. I for one can never be a Roman Catholic. I differ widely and deeply from Roman Catholicism. Those differences seem to me serious. I must maintain my own convictions over against what seem to me its grave errors. But, nevertheless, I

must also recognize those differences as minor matters in religion—the real, essential thing being the life of the spirit; that life of the spirit which we must reverently recognize in the barefoot Carmelite, and therefore dare not refuse to fellowship with him.

The other illustration is from one far removed from Brother Lawrence, not only geographically but in the wider spaces which heredity and environment place between him and the Roman Catholic monk.

This son of God was born of poor parents in a remote village of a great land far away. He was early dedicated to religion. He became what in the Catholic church would be called an acolyte. It was his duty as a lad to serve the priests in their ministrations. In the sacred building wherein he ministered was a venerable image of the Divine Being. Gazing reverently upon this sacred image from time to time one idea came to possess his mind: "Is there anything behind this image? Is it true that there is a Divine Being in the universe? And is it true that that Being loves and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is there

any reality in religion?" Day after day he would weep and say, "Is it true that thou art, or is it all poetry? Art thou the imagination of poets and misguided people or is there such a reality?"

This thought, which was foremost in his mind, gained in strength every day until he could think of nothing else. He would forget his duties in the ministry of worship. At last it became impossible for him to fulfill those duties. He retreated to a forest and lived there. Of this period in his life he said long after that he could not tell how the sun rose and set or how he lived. He forgot to eat—forgot everything but the thought possessing him. During this period he was lovingly watched over by a relative, who put into his mouth the food which he mechanically swallowed. As the evening would draw on and the peals of the bells in the nearby temples reached him in the forest, the music of the chimes and the voices of the worshiping people would make the boy very sad, leading him to cry out: "One day is gone in vain and thou dost not come; one day of this short life is gone and I have not known the truth!" In the agony of his

soul he would sometimes press his face against the earth and weep.

A divine madness seized the boy. Days, weeks, months passed in this struggle of his soul. He began to see visions. The secrets of his nature dawned upon him. Veil after veil fell from the infinite mystery.

A holy woman heard of him and sought him out that she might help him. Recognizing his trouble, she said to him: "My son, blessed is the man upon whom such madness comes. The whole of this universe is mad; some for wealth, some for pleasure, some for fame. Blessed is the man who is mad after God." A saintly and philosophic monk heard of him, and he, too, sought out the boy that he might help him. He taught the lad the philosophy underlying his sacred books, but soon found that the pupil was in some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months with the boy, at the end of which he initiated him into his monastic order and took his departure.

The lad's relatives thought that his madness would be cured if they could get him married. He had been betrothed at the age of eighteen. In

her far off home, the girl had heard that her betrothed had become a religious enthusiast and that he was even considered insane. She set out to find him and to learn the truth for herself. A pure and noble soul, she was able to understand his longings and to sympathize with them. She renounced her claim upon him and bade him continue in the life to which he had given himself, only asking for herself that she might remain near him to learn of him. She became one of his most devoted disciples, revering him as a divine being. This experience was, in the Far East, the parallel of the touching story of St. Clara and St. Francis. Through her revelation of womanhood, largely, he was enabled to gain the elevation of soul whence he could see in every woman's face only the reflection of the face of the source and spring of all womanhood, whom men as wide apart in time and in thought as Augustine and Theodore Parker were wont to cali "our Mother God." Made pure himself, he could look upon every woman's face as transfigured with awe and reverence. Thus he was helped by a noble woman to cast out every lust of the flesh.

The love of money was also exorcised in his experience. The thought of worldly wealth he abandoned when he became a monk. Hosts of his devotees longed to bestow gifts upon him, but he received from no one aught more than that which sufficed for the simplest necessities of life. The sight of money filled him with strange dread. He long practiced a curious self-discipline. He would take in one hand a piece of gold and in the other a lump of earth. He would call the gold earth and the earth gold, and then, changing the contents of one hand into the other, he would keep up the process until he lost all sense of the difference between the gold and the earth. Thus, in these two experiences he embodied the principle which is the heart of all religion, as taught alike by Buddha, and Marcus Aurelius, and Saint Francis, as lived supremely in the Christ of God—the principle of Renunciation.

His was no mere cloistered saintliness. In his latter years he ministered as a teacher devotedly and consumingly. But he did not begin to teach until he himself had learned the truth. The principle of his life was—first form character and

then results will come of themselves. His favorite illustration was: "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey; so let the lotus of your character be full blown and the results will follow."

That he won the loftiest character his revering disciples testify. One writes of him: "I found that man could be perfect even in the body. Those lips never cursed any one, never criticized any one. Those eyes were beyond the possibility of seeing evil. That mind had lost the power of thinking evil. He saw nothing but good." This same disciple writes of him that, though unlettered, the wise men from the great university in the town near which he dwelt would throng out to listen to him.

No wonder that to one who could thus say, "We speak that which we do know and testify that which we have seen," men flocked in crowds to still the hunger of the soul. To them he would talk twenty hours out of the twenty-four, and that not for one day but for weeks and months. He would not refuse to help the humblest of the thousands seeking his aid. A throat trouble

developed. He could not be persuaded to refrain from teaching. "While I can speak I must teach them." So he wasted toward the end. As the news of his failing strength spread far and wide, the multitudes increased, intent on hearing him before he passed away. At last the end came. One morning he told his disciples that he would lay down the body that day; and, repeating the most sacred words of the sacred book of the land, he entered into unconsciousness, and so passed away.

One who was known well and honored deeply in this land, who "walked with God and was not, for God took him," said of this saint: "In the midst of his emaciation his face retains its fullness and childlike tenderness, a profound humbleness and unspeakable sweetness of expression, and a smile that I have seen on no other face that I can remember." Speaking of his trances and ecstasies, the same writer declared of this saint of God: "That he sees something, hears and enjoys, when he is dead to all the outward world, there is no doubt. If not, why should he in the midst of that unconsciousness burst into floods of tears, break out into prayers, songs and utterances, the

force and pathos of which pierce the hardest hearts and bring tears to eyes that never wept before under the influence of religion?"

This saint of God was known in his land as Paramhamsa Srimat Ramakrishna. He is regarded by thousands of his fellow countrymen in India to-day as a divine incarnation. Even in our western world he is recognized as perhaps the greatest saint of God in the modern world. (He was born the 20th of February, 1835.) The men whose testimony has been quoted were no less eminent than Swami Vivekananda and Protap Chunder Mozoomdar.

Did this Hindu saint not embody "pure religion and undefiled?" Was not his religion the one essential, pure, vital religion? An alien to us, a man of another land, dark-skinned, brought up under thoughts which are strange to us, differing widely in many respects from us—is not this "heathen" one with us, as we ourselves are truly religious?

I do not slur over the intellectual differences between us and him. We cannot lightly cut our rootings in the past, out of which we have grown.

We cannot easily change the environment which has so largely moulded us. We do not deny the evolution through which all ancient religions seem to us to have led up towards Jesus the Christ of God, and to have crowned themselves in his consciousness. Yet I cannot but find in this Hindu saint the shining of that light, which, coming to the full in Jesus, was none the less the light "which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." If we draw the limits of religious fellowship short of this Hindu saint, those limits shut out religion itself.

Here, then, we have the barefooted Carmelite of the Catholic Church and the ascetic Yogi of the Hindu forest, at equally opposite extremes from us, each living essential religion, the religion which is the life of the spirit. The limits of religious fellowship must include them.

If we hesitate to accept this large truth on its own authority, wondering how it squares with the formulas of our faith, let us recall that noble article of the oldest and simplest of Christian creeds. "I believe in . . . the communion of saints," the spiritual fellowship of holy souls.

And this without a single qualifying word in the creed to limit this communion by any boundaries, even of Christianity itself! And then let us hearken to the fine exposition of this belief given in the Sarum Manual, one of the mediæval progenitors of the offices of The Prayer Book. In the office for the Visitation of the Sick, the parish priest is directed thus to examine the sick man:

> Dearest Brother, dost thou believe . . . in the Communion of Saints; that is, that all men who live in charity are partakers of all the gifts of grace which are dispensed in the church, and that all who are in fellowship with the just here in the life of grace are in fellowship with them in glory?

If such concrete study of the limits of religious fellowship is persuasive as to the principle involved, we may make two applications of that principle,—more timely for a decade ago, but sufficiently illustrative of the present study to be recalled.

Very remarkable bodies of representatives of nearly all the great denominations of Christianity in our country have met to consider the possibility of federating the Christian churches for the

practical work of religion in our land. Such conventions are surely a sign of the times, for which we should give God thanks, taking courage to strive still more earnestly for Christian union. But one conference that met in New York City deliberately declined to include representatives of Unitarianism. Probably it was justified in so doing on practical grounds. The first step towards the federation of the churches must needs be taken by the great evangelical bodies, and they doubtless are not yet ready to subordinate the intellectual tenets of Unitarianism to the ethical and spiritual life of Unitarians. They still count the notes of orthodoxy as of greater moment than the fruits of the Spirit. What men think about Christ is more important to them than what Christ thought about man. And so the door of that great conference was, with regretful courtesy, shut in the face of such Christian men as Edward Everett Hale, John D. Long and Samuel Eliot. Is not this lamentable action of that conference a recrudescence of a lower conception of religion than that which the Christ taught and lived?

The peace of Portsmouth introduced to the

fellowship of the great nations of modern civilization a new and strange sister among the states of the world. Japan made good her claim to be counted among the great powers of the world; made that claim good in the splendid skill and the magnificent valor shown alike by her army and her navy. She also made good her claim to be treated among the Christian nations of the world—if we will admit to Christian fellowship a people who, if they do not hold all the ideals of Christendom, at least hold many; who, composing their ideals in ways strange to Christendom and short of its final aim, yet hold philosophies by which a race may live exaltedly.

Japan illustrated her religious faith in her moral life; her faith in the supremacy of the ideal, in a celestial over-lordship; her faith in the continued life of those who have passed from earth; in the soul-mastership; of her Lord Buddha; the faith whence has flowed the forcefulness for her victories in war and for her victories, no less renowned, in peace. Face to face with the white-skinned Christian stands the yellow pagan, asking the due of racial recognition, of religious fellowship.

Shall she have it? Will Christendom still call her "heathen," and patronize her pleasantly, while it proceeds to convert her? Or will Christendom trust its own Christ enough to welcome the light shining in her eyes, and thus make ready for a spiritual exchange between the East and the West of the soul-goods of each, while thus best preparing the way for the Land of the Rising Sun to welcome the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with healing on its wings? With solemn challenge the East strikes the center of the shield of the West, summoning it to a test of faith such as Christendom has never known since the days of old, when the young religion strove with the venerable religions of the East, with Isis and Mithra and the Mother of the gods, and found itself in this mortal conflict.

No matter how most orthodox pastors caution, no matter what most learned professors instruct, we may trust the religion within us in fellowshiping with the truly religious everywhere, in "the freedom of the faith."

We may need our creeds and institutions a long while yet, but let these swathing-bands of the

infant soul be elastic. Let them stretch as the life swells within the soul, the life which is the love of God and the love of man; stretch until the miracle shall be accomplished, and those whom our intellects judge to stand outside the limits of religious fellowship, the heart sees to be within the bands of a man. Oh! the shame and the sin of the waste of men and money over our petty, parochial pieties, our devotion to creeds and institutions, our slavery to sects and churches, our enthusiasm over the things which only separate us; while above us all, in our pitiful blindness, sobs the great heart of the Christ: "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

VIII

THE POSSIBILITIES OF COMMON WORSHIP

The possibilities of common worship are the possibilities of developed intellectual and spiritual life. No worship in common is possible between men who are unevolved intellectually and spiritually. Undeveloped men, intellectually and spiritually, must worship, if they worship at all, within narrow limitations—the limitations of the family, the tribe, the clan, the city, the state, the denomination, the religion. As men evolve intellectually and spiritually they grow out of the limitations which narrow and confine their worship within social, political, and sectarian bounds—they grow large enough to commingle their aspirations and reverences in the recognition of something common below all diversities of creed and cult. The measure of the possibility of common

worship is, therefore, the measure of the possibility of common life.

It is of supreme importance for man that he should worship somewhat and somewhere. The final condemnation of a man before the bar of the soul is the sentence which Emerson passed upon Gibbon—"The man had no shrine." The man who has no shrine, no altar of reverence and veneration and aspiration—woe betide him! That he should worship somewhat and somewhere, even though within the narrowest limitations of the narrowest mind—this is the supreme desideratum for life.

In the beginning, and always in the innermost essentials, worship, as we now understand it,—spiritual reverence, aspiration, up-look, communion with the divine,—this must be an individual affair, an experience of the soul within itself. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into the secret place of thee, and when thou hast shut the door upon thee pray to thy Father which is in the secret." The Hindoos, of whatever sectarian denomination, have a common recognition of the supreme sanctity of what they call The Chosen

Path. Members of all the varying sects of India share alike in the recognition of this supreme function of religion. It means that each man shall, within the silence of his own soul, meditate upon, adore, and aspire after that ideal of life which seems to him the truest and the highest.

Therefore, worship must always, in its innermost essentials, be something peculiar to the individual man. For this highest worship he needs no temple, no mosque, no synagogue, no church.

But, just because the innermost essential of worship is individual, internal, spiritual—therefore, in it there is the possibility of most immediate and direct and universal fellowship. In that myriads of Hindoos, under different sectarian forms and within different sectarian fellowships, alike walk, within the soul, The Chosen Path, they therein declare the fellowship of all who pursue this way of life. Whatever may separate them in other respects, they are therein one—one in the spirit.

The man, therefore, who truly worships, in the innermost recesses of his being, worships the innermost reality of all being—that man is partici-

pating in the common worship, loved by all spiritual beings who share a common spiritual life. In this supreme ritual of the soul he must recognize a fellowship which transcends all time, all space, all boundaries of thought, all limitations of fellowship, ecclesiastical and national and racial—must know himself one with all who love God—the Infinite and Eternal Goodness.

Man is, however, a social being. He cannot live apart from all his fellows. He cannot follow a purely individual life. "The Chosen Path" he can walk within the innermost recesses of his own soul. When he comes out therefrom to commingle with his fellows he must seek some fellowship with them, in matters spiritual as in matters political, social, economic, and artistic—as in all the relations of man with man. He must seek, therefore, *some* common worship, out of the necessities of a common life—whatever the limitations of that common life, however small and petty it may be.

Worship, as we first find it, historically, was limited by the common life of the family, the tribe, the clan, the city, the state. The members of

these ascending social groups had a common worship. They had a common worship because they had a common life. There was a blood-bond between the members of the group. The recognition of this blood-bond made possible the communal worship. They had the same god. The same ritual was prescribed for the worship of this god. The same needs were felt by all the members of the community.

Beyond this social group there was no affiliation, no fellowship, because there was no blood-bond. The members of the little community were aliens to the members of all other communities. Each other community had its own special god, its own prescribed ritual, its own peculiar needs. The possibilities of common worship were rigidly confined to the common life. As the study of the limits of religious fellowship has shown, there was no dream of any fellowship beyond it.

From those ancient historic groupings, up through all the developments of modern civilization, the possibilities of common worship have ever been found in the possibilities of common life. Where common life was recognized, a common

worship has been felt to be possible. Where no common life was recognized, there has been no recognition of the possibility of any common worship.

Thus, in the manifold religious divisions of our modern world, the limitations of common worship are precisely the limitations of the recognized commonalty in religion,—and there has been fellowship in thought and in spirit, the participation in a common creed and a common cult, just in so far there has been the sense of a common brotherhood.

As the sense of a common life grows and expands, the sense of a possible common worship grows and expands with it.

The little man in the little sect feels that he can worship with his other little brothers because they are brothers in the one true faith, in the one true life. He cannot recognize the possibility of any common worship between his own sect, which holds the exclusive monopoly of divine truth and divine life, and any other sect, which is an alien to the household of God. As he grows out of these swathing bands of religion, and comes to recognize

that truth is held in common by other sects and other religions, that the life of the soul is shared in common by other sects and by other religions, he grows to recognize the possibility of common worship.

In the recognition of the common life, mental and spiritual, there is a recognition of the common worship open to all who share that common life. "Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." Therefore, in the beginning, he must have his little sect, his petty denomination—the first social grouping; marked and bounded by the recognized fraternities of thought and feeling, of temperament and tradition, of education and habit, of the whole mental and spiritual outlook. The littlest sect, the pettiest church, the smallest denomination, the feeblest religion, is an attempt at something bigger than any individual, an effort for some socializing of the soul. We may look upon its limitations and pity it; upon its narrowness and condemn it. Relative to the larger life of the spiritual cosmos, how insignificantly small the biggest of these sects of religion seem! None

the less, each is, as already said, an effort toward something bigger than the mere man himself. It is an aspiration, an effort for some common worship.

The little man will be content always within the little church. The provincial soul will need no traveling forth from the provincial sect. But as the soul grows within the pettiest denomination, it must reach out to other denominations—that is, to other souls between whom and itself there is the recognition of something common in the spiritual life, whatever the separation of the outer life may be. A man may be measured, always, in his intellectual and spiritual development, by the possibility of his reaching out from his own fold and clasping the hands of his brother souls in other folds. The mere sectarian, the mere denominationalist, the mere churchman will never want to go outside of his own pen-fold. But the soul swelling with the life of God, the recognition of something common between all true souls, will be ever longing for some expression of the sense of fellowship which has awakened within him toward his brothers—the brothers of the blood-bond of the family of God.

So this growing soul will be glad of the opportunity of worshiping with others, under other forms, in other rituals. As opportunity comes, he will be thankful to forsake a while his own conventicle, and take part in the worship of some other cult. The little man, when he wanders into a strange place of worship, where other forms are used than those familiar to himself, will see only that which is repellent to his thought, his feeling, only that which calls forth his pity or his aversion, only that which prompts his harsh condemnation. The big man, the man who has grown in his soul, will find, before the strangest and most alien shrine, the sense of the Divine Presence awakening the sense of the commonalty of the soul made in the image of the Divine, the spiritual fellowship. He will see, below and within the forms that are alien and repellent, something to admire, to revere, to recognize as divine. The cockney on a specially conducted Cook's tour will stand in St. Peter's, with his hat upon his head, until the verger knocks it off; stark upright while the whole throng is kneeling on the marble floor, contemptuously smiling at the idolatry of these Papists, falling on

their knees at the tinkling of the silver bell. The grown soul will feel and act as Lowell did in Chartres Cathedral:

I turned and saw a beldame on her knees;
With eyes astray, she told mechanic beads
Before some shrine of saintly womanhood,
Bribed intercessor with the far-off Judge:
Such my first thought, by kindlier soon rebuked,
Pleading for whatsoever touches life
With upward impulse: be He nowhere else,
God is in all that liberates and lifts,
In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles:
Blessed the natures shored on every side
With landmarks of hereditary thought!
Thrice happy they that wander not lifelong
Beyond near succor of the household faith,
The guarded fold that shelters, not confines!
Their steps find patience in familiar paths,
Printed with hope by loved feet gone before
Of parent, child, or lover, glorified
By simple magic of dividing Time.
My lids were moistened as the woman knelt,
And—was it will, or some vibration faint
Of sacred Nature, deeper than the will?—
My heart occultly felt itself in hers,
Through mutual intercession gently leagued.

Browning teaches the same lesson in the beauti-

ful parable of fellowship in religion called "Christmas Eve." He stands in the vestibule of the little Mount Zion Chapel as the common folk from the vicinity crowd into it of a rainy evening. The hopeless commonness of these people, as they press by him out of the dripping rain into the steamy chapel,—how vividly he pictures it! He tries to take part in the worship, but finds nothing appealing to him. It is all repellent to his every taste. The droning of the hymns, the cant of the commonplace sermon—he can stand them no longer, and so goes forth into the night to be alone with nature. The storm has cleared. What wonder that the starry canopy of the boundless heavens affects his soul in sharp contrast to the pettiness of the surroundings in which he has just been! He gives himself up to the communion of his solitary soul with the Infinite Being revealed in nature. A form lustrous and lovely he discerns before him, recognizable at once.

> He himself with his human air.
> On the narrow pathway, just before.
> I saw the back of him, no more—
> He had left the chapel, then, as I.

Jesus had been worshiping with these commonplace folk in their commonplace ritual. Had he left them, too, in disgust at the unspirituality of their worship?

The scene changes. Browning finds himself before the great basilica of St. Peter. He hears and sees the splendors of the most ornate ritual of earth. The Christ passes within to join the worship of the Roman Mass, as he had joined the service of Mount Zion Chapel. Unable to worship in the chapel conventicle, he had been left by Jesus "outside the door."

> Yes, I said—that he will go
> And sit with these in turn, I know.

Recognizing the blind and selfish limitations which had prevented him from worshiping in Mount Zion Chapel, he aspires for something better now:

> Do these men praise Him? I will raise
> My voice up to their point of praise!
> I see the error—

Again the scene changes. He finds himself looking in upon the lecture hall of a German

university. An emaciated professor is lecturing upon the tale of the Christmas-tide. He resolves away the story into legend and myth. All that which to the Christian seems most precious, most sacred, disappears in this crucible of criticism. The Christ who had led him, he does not find by his side:

> Can it be that he stays inside?
> Is the vesture left me to commune with?
> Could my soul find aught to sing in tune with
> Even at this lecture, if she tried?

Once more the scene changes. He finds himself back in Mount Zion Chapel, on the bench, "bolt upright," as if he had never left it.

The Christmas Eve in that hot, close, steamy chapel had brought him, in a dream, an experience which, now that he found himself awake there, taught him the lesson:

> Better have knelt at the poorest stream
> That trickles in pain from the straitest rift!
> For the less or the more is all God's gift,
> Who blocks up or breaks wide the granite-seam.
> And here, is there water or not, to drink?

I put up pencil and join chorus
To Hepzibah Tune, without further apology,
The last five verses of the third section
Of the seventeenth hymn in Whitfield's Collection,
To conclude with the Doxology.

Are the possibilities of common worship to be limited by such individual and occasional participations in the religious services of other denominations than our own? Do such individual and occasional fraternizings express the limits of spiritual brotherhood? Is there a blood-bond between souls of different types, so real that anything more than this is practicable? If such a blood-bond of souls exists among those of different names, religiously, then, surely, there are larger possibilities of expressing this common life in a common worship. Not merely occasionally as individuals, but at least occasionally as churches, we should come together in the confession of "our common Christianity," to use Dean Stanley's noble phrase: that confession which is best made by a common worship—a common uplook, a common reverence, a common adoration, a common aspiration.

This was the firm belief, the noble dream of that great man Dr. Muhlenburg. Not soon will his memory pass. He was one of the greatest men that our modern Christianity has brought forth—at once saint and seer and statesman. Belonging to what would be known as the High Church wing of the Protestant Episcopal Church, so large was his conception of Catholic Christianity, so genuine was his recognition of the common Christianity of all who "profess and call themselves Christians," that he was unsatisfied with his own beautiful forms of worship—he himself having been the first to introduce the vested choir in our own American branch of the English Church. So he tried to establish united services on Good Friday—the day on which Christians commemorate the dying of their common Lord and Master. He wanted to have the Holy Communion celebrated regularly on that day, as the expression of the communion of saints, the common life of all Christians who are seeking the life of goodness. If we believe in such a "common Christianity," can we not strive for some such occasional services of worship, in which all branches of the Church of

Christ may unite in a common expression of their spiritual life?

A "common Christianity"—that is a noble phrase, a noble thought! There is, however, something larger and finer than it—a "common humanity." God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth." In that one blood flows the one life of the one race. The unity of man carries with it the oneness of the spiritual nature of man. The spiritual nature of man carries with it the oneness of essential religion—religion which is at once ethical and spiritual. All men are the children of the All-Father. All men are, in their own ways, feeling after God, "if haply they may find him." All men are, through different forms, expressing this one longing of their souls to know God, which "is eternal life." All religions, therefore, are the expressions of the one religious nature of man. All religions are true, in so far as they hold truths. They are false, in so far as they are imperfect and undeveloped. Their unity is found in the inner life of them all—the sap swelling through bud and blossom upon every different branch toward the

one flowering of the tree. He who recognizes this, and knows that all men are his spiritual brothers in the blood-bond of the soul, he must see the possibilities of a common worship among all who call themselves the "friends and lovers of God." As an expression of this recognition of spiritual unity among men of different religions, there ought to be at least occasional services of worship, participated in, as it were formally, by representatives of our various great religions; thus to testify that below all other differences there is a common substratum of unity, in the common aspirations and reverences.

This was the dream of a great man of England, some centuries ago—a man at once among the leading statesmen of his day, and among the noblest characters of all days. In a little work which he wrote, sketching the forms and features of the ideal community of which he dreamed, unto which he aspired and for which he labored in old England, he drew this vision of the common worship of "Utopia":

> There are several sorts of religions, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town. . . . Yet the greater and wiser sort of them worship none

of these, but adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity. . . . Those among them that have not received our religion, do not fright any from it, and use none ill that goes over to it. . . . He (Utopus) judged it not fit to determine anything rashly, and seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire men in a different manner, and be pleased with this variety.

Though there are many different forms of religion among them, yet all these, how various soever, agree in the main point, which is the worshiping the Divine Essence; and therefore there is nothing to be seen or heard in their temples in which the several persuasions among them may not agree; for every sect performs those rites that are peculiar to it, in their private houses, nor is there anything in the public worship that contradicts the particular ways of those different sects. . . . Nor are there any prayers among them but such as every one of them may use without prejudice to his own opinion. . . . Both priests and people offer up very solemn prayers to God in a set form of words; and these are so composed, that whatsoever is pronounced by the whole assembly may be likewise applied by every man in particular to his own condition.

The man who thus wrote was a Roman Catholic. Can we not reach even now into the largeness of his vision?

Once, at least, in our modern world, has the vision of Sir Thomas More been realized. In the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair, there were representatives of nearly every great form of religion on the earth. Well-nigh every branch of the Christian Church was represented—the Roman Church and the Greek Church, and every variety of Protestantism. The great religions of the East were represented, too: Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Hindooism, and others. It is impossible to conceive of a more heterogeneous religious gathering than was this! How wide the intellectual differences of these representatives of earth's religions was plainly shown in the statements made upon that platform. Each of these representatives of the great religions of the earth was in earnest in his convictions—ready to surrender no one of them. Yet, in the spirit that prevailed on that occasion—the recognition of the common blood-bond of all souls as the children of the All-Father—it was found wholly practicable that all these men of various races and creeds and cults should unite daily in one form of prayer—

"Our Father which art in Heaven." It was worth all that Parliament cost, of money and of labor, to see, once upon the earth the representatives of well-nigh all the religions of the earth affirm thus the possibilities of a common worship.

So, at a later date, the New York State Conference of Religion early took into consideration the subject of the possibility of common worship. A special committee appointed urged the importance of the element of worship in the sessions of the conference. It was felt that the wider the intellectual differences represented in the Conference the greater the need of coming together in the spirit, for worship. Finally there resulted a "Book of Common Worship," prepared by this special committee, under the authorization of the Executive Committee. The book itself includes the choicest passages of the Old and New Testaments, with a number of selections from Rabbinical Commentaries on the Old Testament, and a considerable anthology of the Sacred Books of the East, representing all the great extant religions, as well as some of the religions of antiquity; nearly a hundred collects or short prayers drawn

from the offices of the Greek and Roman Churches, from the "Uses" of the Church of England, and from the liturgies of other great Churches, together with prayers of private individuals of all branches of the Christian Church, orthodox as well as heterodox, selections from the offices of the Jewish Church, and a representation of the theistic worship of India; and finally, some seventy-five hymns drawn from all sources. This book was put forth as an object-lesson in the possibilities of common worship. It is believed that it can be used in Conferences by all who are represented in them. In fact it has been used, acceptably, and has to that extent thereby been a demonstration of the possibilities of common worship.

What can be done in one instance can be done in other instances. Other representative gatherings of the varied forms of religion upon our shores can unite in some such common worship—thus confessing the common faith underlying all creeds, the common life breathing through all souls.

Criticisms, of course, will be made upon this "Book of Common Worship," and upon the effort of which it was an imperfect expression.

The ultraconservative will turn to the Christian collects, embodied in it, and point out the fact that the formula usually concluding Christian prayers is omitted. It is the wont in Christian churches to conclude prayers with some such expression as "in the name of Jesus Christ," or "for the sake of Jesus Christ," or "through Jesus Christ." For obvious reasons, in a gathering representing Judaism as well as Christianity, such a form cannot be used. Is this a surrender of anything vital in Christianity? Let it suffice to point out the fact that this formula was of late growth in Christian liturgics. The earlier liturgies either did not have it, or only used it occasionally. There was no standard rule as to its use. Some of the noblest prayers of the earliest Christian liturgics were wholly without it—as will be seen in the "Book of Common Worship." We return to the primitive usage of Christianity. And, if primitive Christianity be the nearest to original Christianity—the Christianity of the Christ—then surely we cannot be far wrong in following this example. The Lord and Master of all Christians taught His disciples to pray thus: "Our

Father which art in Heaven." That prayer concluded without the formula evolved in later ages. If it is a formula vital to Christ's Christianity, why did He not teach it? If so unessential to Christ's Christianity, can it be essential to our Christianity? In reality, the conception of this Christian formula, as universally necessary, is a total misconception of one of the great words and thoughts of Jesus: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name it shall be given you." That does not mean the mere repetition of the name of Christ. As every pious Jew can tell our Christians, the name is the symbol of his character. Then do we pray in the name of Jesus when we pray in the spirit of Jesus, in the light of the truth of Jesus. To pray any otherwise than after the pattern of the spirit of Jesus, according to the mind that was in Jesus, that is to fail in using the name of Jesus—that and that alone. Surely the truth of Jesus, the spirit of Jesus, is found in a common worship among all who are the sons of His Father and our Father, His God and our God. So we are, in the deepest and truest sense, praying in the name of Jesus, when we look around among all the children

of earth and say: "Whoso doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and my sister."

The possibilities of *common* worship—by a changed emphasis, we change the light in which we are regarding the topic. A common worship holds possibilities for the common life of man of supreme importance. All earnest souls are dreaming of religious unity. Unity is the great generalization of our age. All things are tending toward it. Religion feels the universal trend. It is becoming synthetic. It is drawing together, from all parts of the earth. Christians are everywhere praying again that prayer of their Master "that they all may be one." Men are everywhere praying that prayer in its largest sense—that they all, all the children of earth, as they are children of the All-Father, may be one. How is Christian unity to be achieved? Surely not by working from without in, in any scheme of ecclesiastic unification.

The lines of hopeful effort toward Christian union are, in my judgment, three. First, intellectual effort to discern the reality of that common Christianity underlying all creeds. Every

great liberalizing factor in our modern Christendom is making thus for unity—as, by winnowing the temporal from the eternal in all sects, it is driving us all back upon the essentials of faith.

Second, practical co-operation, wherein the churches come together as facing the common problems of social life, desiring in common to establish the Kingdom of God, the Divine Order. Each church is finding that the problems of intemperance, and impurity, and dishonesty, and political corruption, and all the other problems of our organic life which it faces, are faced by every other church. Each church is finding itself helpless to grapple with these problems alone. As the churches all come to realize that in the grappling with these problems is their true work—the building up of the Kingdom of God upon earth—they will draw together, as they are now drawing together; waiving all differences, setting aside all contrarieties of opinion, holding in the background all that separates them, that they may work in common for the common need of man. Most practical and hopeful this line of effort toward Christian unity!

One line of effort toward Christian unity remains. The recognition of the common spiritual life among "all who call themselves Christians" will lead increasingly to some form of common worship. Whatever our differences concerning intellectual opinions and practical philanthropy, all true souls must feel that there is but one love of God, and of the Christ hid in God, within them all. Expression of this in worship is the best confession of the oneness of our spiritual life—the spiritual life out of which all religions grow. The confession of this is the confession of essential unity as already existing—established in the very nature and constitution of the soul. In the very nature of things, therefore, all Christians find themselves one when they can worship together. The things that divide them must be the things of lesser importance: intellectual opinions, temperamental tastes, habits of life, etc. Until we can see eye to eye intellectually, and until we can agree enough as to what needs to be done for the world to pull all together in social reform—we can at least come together, now and then, in the sublimities of a common worship, and thus confess that we are one in Christ.

The worship which is signed in the sacred symbolism of the churches—this must always be the highest effort of the human soul. Into it religion must always strain its essential secret. The religion of the future must be more than the religion of the past. Worship must be higher and purer, more intellectual, more ethical, more spiritual; more an expression of the very soul of man. A modern work on Christian Institutions, by a presbyter of the Protestant Episcopal Church who has done not a little to help forward the thought and life of the Church, thus concludes:

It is possible that the Protestant world now stands on the eve of some transition, waiting for the manifestation of its full content, in a consummate act of worship. It has been said that worship is one of the lost arts; but if so, it is not to be found by compressing the spiritual wealth secured by the Protestant reformation, in the providence of God, into the moulds of ages inferior to our own. Rather must we go forward, taking all that the past can offer, in so far as it can harmonize with a greater ideal, but reconstructing, in some more comprehensive way, the worship and the conception of the sacrifice acceptable to God. . . . What remains to be done is to gather up in one inclusive act of sacrifice, all that these modern ages have

contributed to the knowledge of God, to consecrate and transfigure, in his sight, all that the heart and the reason hold as inestimably dear and precious. From this sacrifice there cannot be withheld any contribution made by the human mind toward the solution of the mystery of existence. The sacrifice will include every department of human interest and inquiry—music, art and poetry, as well as science, philosophy and theology. It will include the life of the whole Church in every age. It will be a Christian sacrifice for Christ Himself will be the supreme offering of humanity to God—He in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in Whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The early Christian Church had glimpses of such a sacrifice; it was to be a bloodless sacrifice, a reasonable offering, the presentation of the mind to God, with all that it discerns of the mind of God, the true, the beautiful and the good. "The noblest sacrifice to God," said Athenagoras in his Apology, "is for us to *know Him* Who is the Creator of the world and of man." "What, then, does God require?" said another Christian writer of the same period, "but the worship of the mind which is pure and holy." This worship of the mind, wanting in ancient ritual, has been enjoined by Christ Himself, as when He urged the love of God with all the heart and soul and mind. In the light of this injunction, that the worship of the mind is essential as is the worship of the heart, is seen more plainly the meaning of those other words which cannot be too often re-

peated: "God is spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Is this all? Again, back of the common Christianity is the common humanity. What is true of common worship for Christianity is true, in a larger sense, of common worship for humanity. That sacrificial worship of the future will be not only the adoration of the intellect before the God of truth, the love of truth itself; it will be the adoration of the heart before the God of Love—love, living itself forth in all service of man, as the service of God. And the abiding sign and symbol thereof will be this holy communion of the Christian Church, lighted up with new significances, consecrated with new enthusiasms, hallowed with new passions, and made the symbol of the life itself.

Vast though the intellectual differences be between the great religions of the earth; varied as the temperamental tastes of different races may be; diverse as the cults and creeds of earth may thus appear—when we come to worship, we are all one, and we know ourselves one in that we can

worship together. Such worship together is thus the confession of the common spiritual life which is the root and fount of all religion, out of which all religions grow.

As Matthew Arnold said: Worship must unite, not divide men.

Thus to worship is to answer the Christ's prayer—Even so, are we one, O Jesus, in the life and love of Thy Father and our Father, Thy God and our God.

IX

CHRISTIANITY IN EVOLUTION

In the struggle for existence among the great religions of the world in the Roman Empire, Christianity proved to be a survival of the fittest. That is the outer story of the success of Christianity. A further and final question arises, which may be considered first, as leading up to and interpreting the outer story:—How came it to pass that Christianity thus succeeded, where other religions, older, more thoroughly organized, better appointed in all external provisions, failed? What was the secret of its success in this struggle for existence? What fitted it for this survival of the fittest?

The deepest currents of the age, through all religions, were making in one and the same direction, towards one and the same goal; the direction in which Christianity moved more rapidly than any other religion.

Everywhere in this epoch, we see the tokens of a profounder religious spirit working through the heart of paganism. Julian, the brilliant and versatile Emperor, is seen upon his knees before the statues of the gods, covering them with kisses; is found by the officials of his court preparing the wood for the sacrifice, doing the most menial service in honor of his divinities. Marcus Aurelius, the greatest of the Roman Emperors, whether in his imperial palace or in his tent upon the shores of the Danube, carries, through all the cares of the court and the sterner anxieties of the army, the hunger and thirst of a great soul after truth and righteousness. Everywhere, through the Apologies of the great defenders of Christianity, we see the souls of men feeling after God, if happily they might find him.

A new and deeper moral earnestness showed itself on every hand. The most marked developments of this were Stoicism and Neo-Platonism—the two movements of paganism, in its decadence, which were breathed throughout with the loftiest moral earnestness. As one reads the pages of Seneca, one fancies one is hearing the echoes of

Paul. Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius reveal to us souls bent upon the pursuit of goodness, devoting life's energies to the cultivation of character. The great group of philosophers who brought about the new Platonism were kindred souls with the Apostles. They, too, were ahungered and athirst after righteousness.

Throughout the nobler portion of mankind a deep longing seized the soul for freedom from sin. The old superficial life of joyousness had passed away, and, in its place, there had come a deep sense of human sinfulness, an oppressive sense of the bondage of evil and a longing for redemption from it. This was what gave the Mysteries their power. Men came to them for initiation into the life of the spirit. They taught men to fight on earth a battle between light and darkness, between good and evil, and trained them to take part in that battle.

A gentler and sweeter spirit of humanity was spreading everywhere. The old coarse and brutal strength of Rome was mantling itself with the graces of kindliness. Virgil betokens this change in the temper and spirit of the age. There is,

throughout his familiar poetry, a sweetness as of a new age. This kindliness of spirit showed itself in new and striking forms of human helpfulness. Charity awoke from its long sleep in paganism, and stirred itself to benefit the poor, the outcast, the friendless, the forlorn. For the first time in the history of Rome slaves came to be treated, not as mere chattels, but as human beings. Cato's slaves worked in chains, like a gang of convicts in the South. They found a sleeping place in the stalls of the oxen. On Pliny's estates the slave chain gang ceased to be. His slaves could acquire property, and even ate at the table with his freed men. He was not ashamed to shed tears at the death of a slave. The law now began to take slaves under its protection. Hadrian forbade their arbitrary killing and provided the right of trial for them. Children came into their rights for the first time in Roman history. Hitherto they were absolutely in the power of the father, who was free to do what he pleased with them. He could kill them at his will. He exposed them, without compunction, when he did not care to bring them up. And to expose a child, as it was termed, meant

simply to take the unwelcome babe and place it in the streets, or leave it in the fields, to meet what fate it might. This had been the custom of good society up to this time. Such exposed children could be treated as slaves by those who chose to take them home and bring them up. Tragan decreed that they should be free. Alexander Severus allowed the father the right to reclaim his child, provided that he repaid the expense of its maintenance. Children began to be objects of interest and care in the home. Philosophers recommended mothers to nurse their children themselves. The training of children became a favorite theme with authors in this period. A new tenderness towards children showed itself. We find the thoughts of Marcus Aurelius, amid all his anxiety about the Empire, occupied with a "little nestling." One searches in vain, in earlier literature, for such a description of a grandchild. Poor children, now, for the first time, came into their share in the State's distribution of corn. Orphan and outcast children began to be cared for. Tragan provided for the care of five thousand in Rome, and for a considerable number in other

towns. When Antoninus lost his wife, Faustina, he thought that the best way to honor her memory was to found an institution for the support of poor girls; and Alexander Severus established a similar institution in honor of his mother, Mammæa. Private persons began to found similar charities. Pliny endowed one in Como, with an income of 30,000 sesterces per annum—that is, about $1500. A rich lady made provision for the support of one hundred children in Terracina, and gave, for that purpose, 1,000,000 sesterces—about $50,000. Such institutions had been undreamed of in ancient Rome. The change which was coming over the spirit of humanity is illustrated in a relief on the column of Tragan, which pictures the Emperor distributing gifts to poor children. This would have been a compliment which an earlier Roman would have utterly failed to appreciate.

Philanthropy began to make itself felt as a force in society. Pliny founded libraries or schools for the towns which had claims upon him, thinking, as he said, that thus a greater benefit would be given to the community than through gladiatorial shows, on which most men spent the money they

gave away for the pleasure of the people. A dealer in healing herbs in a little town left, by will, to the town three hundred jars of drugs and 6000 sesterces —about $300—in order that medicine might be gratuitously dispensed to the poor. Upon a tomb of this period we find the inscription—"Do good, and thou wilt carry it with thee." That was a novel sentiment in Roman society—though it would have been familiar enough to the ancient Egyptians.

A deep longing for closer and truer human fellowship between classes made itself felt at this period as never before. The bonds of brotherhood were felt drawing men together—those bands of a man which, alone, can unite a human society in a living organism. As always—and this fact should be pondered well by men and women of culture and of wealth—as always, this sense of brotherhood first made itself felt among the poor. It was not the aristocrats of Rome who cherished this new ideal of fraternity—it was the workingmen of Rome. They founded the colleges and the koinon, the labor unions and trade organizations and mutual benefit societies of all kinds, which, at this

time, spread throughout the Empire, rapidly gathering myriads of members. They were, one and all, efforts of the soul of man to bind men together in a more living bond of brotherhood.

These are hints of the forces, moral and spiritual, which were working through paganism in the period of its decadence; signs of the direction in which the deep currents of human life were setting at this time. These forces were found by men to be working in Christianity more powerfully than in any other religion—hence Christianity's appeal to them. In this direction Christianity proved to be making more rapidly than any other religion—hence the age threw itself upon Christianity, to be borne forward most speedily to the haven where it would be. Paganism was spiritualizing itself, even as it was adying. In its last hours it became transfigured, and the inner light glorified it. The old form burst and the spirit passed out, not to be unclothed, but to be clothed with the new and finer body of institutions and symbols and beliefs which we call Christianity.

What were the needs of man's soul, thus manifesting themselves in the civilization of the time,

which Christianity satisfied more fully than any other religion, and because of which it succeeded in the struggle for existence—proving a survival of the fittest? Generally speaking, we may sum these needs in the statement that paganism was developing a longing for certitude in religion—a desire for a clear recognition of one living and true God, good, righteous and holy and just, the Father of men; a longing for a clear and assured vision of immortality (these two already studied in connection with the Mysteries); a hunger and a thirst for a truer righteousness and a deeper holiness than was found in the world; a quickened perception of the great law of sacrifice, under which, the uplifting of humanity is to be carried out; a new and deeper sense of human fellowship; an aspiration for a veritable human brotherhood.

Men were longing, first of all, for some certitude in religion. Certitude was the one thing they did not find in the many religions about them. They failed to convince the average man with a conviction that lifted him above doubt. A balancing of probabilities was all that most men attained unto, concerning the great questions of life. Proba-

bility is a good enough guide in ordinary matters, but as the staff on which to lean under the trials of life, as the strength by which to resist the temptations of life, as the comfort in which to meet death itself—probability is a poor enough satisfaction for such crises of the soul. This was the pathos of the age, that men everywhere longing, as men in all times must long, for some certitude, groped around as in the dark to find only shrewd guesses and happy divinations and learned philosophizings and oracular messages which baffled, while alluring—a will-o-the-wisp light, which guided men only to disappoint them. Pilate's question bespoke the skepticism of the age—"what is truth?" Cicero sets forth the doctrines of the various philosophers concerning the human soul, and adds: "Which of these opinions may be true, a god may know; which may be only probable is a difficult question." Seneca, the great Roman stoic and statesman, sighs—"Ah! if one only might have a guide to truth." "We will wait," Plato had said long before, "for One, be it a god or a god-inspired man, to teach us our religious duties, and, as Athene in Homer says to Diomed, to take away

the darkness from our eyes." As the same great philosopher, in a famous passage, writes again—"We must lay hold of the best human opinion in order that, borne by it as on a raft, we may sail over the dangerous sea of life; unless we can find a stronger boat, or some word of God, which will more surely and safely carry us."[1] A raft is a poor makeshift for a shipwreck. If nothing better is found, by all means let us take to the raft. But none will so long for a staunch boat, as he who clings to the raft, amid the buffetings of the great billows. So, men, clinging as for their life, to the best human opinion that they could gain, scan the horizon for some strong word of God coming to their rescue, upon which they might surely and safely float across the waves of this troublesome life, and find themselves in the haven where they would be. One of the leaders of the new Platonism, Porphyry, made a collection of pagan oracles and great spiritual words, in the preface to which, he says:

[1] For this and several later quotations from philosophers of the period, convenient reference may be made to Uhlhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism."

Those will best recognize the usefulness of this collection who, in their longing for truth, have prayed that they might enjoy a vision of the Gods, in order that they might find rest from their doubts in teachings which emanated from trustworthy authority.

"Rest from their doubts"—this was the great longing of the age in religion. That they might find rest from their doubts men had come, at length, to feel that they must somewhere find "teachings which emanated from trustworthy authority."

This was what men found, to the satisfaction of their souls, in Christianity. They rested from their doubts. They gained a clear vision of God. They found a strong word of God on which they might safely make the voyage of life. They found a source of trustworthy authority. Wherever one turns in the literature of early Christianity he is impressed with this sense of the immense relief that came to men's souls in gaining a new and reasonable certitude where all had been problematical before. "I know in whom I have believed"—that is the conviction that takes possession of men's souls. This is life eternal, that

they might know the only true God—this was the new faith which was more than faith, which was knowledge. The clouds broke over the earth. The sun shone through the fog. Men basked in the light of clear and certain conviction. And the religion which brought this certitude to men carried all men with it.

Men were longing for clearness and certitude in their conception of God. Everywhere the world was reaching towards one and the same thought of God—His unity and His goodness. This was the trend felt in every great religion of antiquity. This was the truth, clearly seen ahead, by the few elect souls of earth. It was plain that all the great religions were evolving this faith. But it had been reached by the few alone. It remained still one of the secrets of the hidden wisdom of paganism. The mass of men groped still in the darkness concerning the unity of God and concerning His character. The mass of men were still Polytheistic, believing in many gods. The face of God had not cleared above the soul of man, revealing a vision of the Eternal, Who loveth righteousness. The children of men still felt themselves orphaned upon

the earth, feeling after God, if, happily, they might find Him, but not yet finding Him as the Father of their souls.

In Christianity men found all these tendencies of religion culminating in a clear and certain conception of God as the One living and true God, good and just and loving. Pagans turned to their Christian friends and found them believing, with a serene and sunny conviction, in one God, and in that God as our Father which art in Heaven. All the deepest spiritual longings of their souls were promised satisfaction in this faith of the Christians. To it they turned, with a joy that we can even now realize as we think over their thoughts again.

The first of the Grecian philosophers to become a convert to Christianity tells us in his writings of his vain wanderings through the schools of the philosophers in search of certainty and peace of mind in the knowledge of the living God.

A stoic, under whose instruction he first placed himself, asserted that the sure knowledge of God, which Justin chiefly longed for, was a subordinate question of philosophical speculation. A peripatetic, of whom he next inquired, demanded, after a few days, as of pri-

mary importance, that he should settle the fee. This repelled Justin, and he went to a Pythagorean, who dismissed him immediately, because he had no knowledge of music, geometry and astronomy, an acquaintance with which the Pythagorean declared was pre-requisite to the study of philosophy, since they are the means by which the soul, absorbed in earthly things, may be purified. Justin then turned to a Platonist, and supposed that he had reached the goal, for his teacher introduced him to the Platonic doctrine of ideas, and the pupil already dreamed that he had become a sage and was near to the vision of Deity. Then, walking alone one day on the shore of the sea, he met an old man, a mature Christian, and fell into conversation with him on divine things. The venerable man showed him that God can be perceived only by a mind sanctified by the Spirit of God, and so affected him that all at once his proud dream of knowledge vanished. The old man, seeing his consternation, pointed him to the Divine Word as the source of all true knowledge of God, and began to tell him of Christ. Following these hints, Justin found in Christianity that sure knowledge of God which he had sought for in vain in the different schools of philosophers.[1]

In his lectures on "The Science of Religion," (page 171) Max Müller sets forth this fact in a very noble passage:

[1] Uhlhorn, pages 155–156.

In exploring together the ancient archives of language, we found that the highest god had received the same name in the ancient mythology of India, Greece, Italy, and Germany, and had retained that name whether worshiped on the Himalayan mountains, or among the oaks of Dodona, on the Capitol, or in the forests of Germany. I pointed out that his name was *Dyaus* in Sanskrit, *Zeus* in Greek, *Jovis* in Latin, *Tiu* in German; but I hardly dwelt with sufficient strength on the startling nature of this discovery. These names are not mere names; they are historical facts, aye, facts more immediate, more trustworthy, than many facts of mediæval history. These words are not mere words, but they bring before us, with all the vividness of an event which we witnessed ourselves but yesterday, the ancestors of the whole Aryan race, thousands of years it may be before Homer and the Veda, worshiping an unseen Being, under the self-same name, the best, the most exalted name, they could find in their vocabulary—under the name of Light and Sky.

And let us not turn away, and say that this was after all but nature-worship and idolatry. No, it was not meant for that, though it may have been degraded into that in later times; *Dyaus* did not mean the blue sky, nor was it simply the sky personified—it was meant for something else. We have in the Veda the invocation *Dyaus pitar*, the Greek *Zeus pater*, the Latin *Jupiter;* and that means in all the three languages what it meant before these three languages were torn asunder

—it means Heaven-Father! These two words are not mere words: they are to my mind the oldest poem, the oldest prayer of mankind, or at least of that pure branch of it to which we belong,—and I am as firmly convinced that this prayer was uttered, that this name was given to the unknown God before Sanskrit was Sanskrit and Greek was Greek, as, when I see the Lord's Prayer in the languages of Polynesia and Melanesia, I feel certain that it was first uttered in the language of Jerusalem. . . .

Thousands of years have passed since the Aryan nations separated to travel to the North and the South, the West and the East; they have each formed their languages, they have each founded empires and philosophies, they have each built temples and razed them to the ground; they have all grown older, and it may be wiser and better; but when they search for a name for what is most exalted and yet most dear to every one of us, when they wish to express both awe and love, the infinite and the finite, they can but do what their old fathers did when gazing up to the eternal sky, and feeling the presence of a Being as far as far, and as near as near can be; they can but combine the self-same words, and utter once more the primeval Aryan prayer, Heaven-Father, in that form which will endure forever, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

Men were longing for certitude concerning Immortality. It was a universal faith—but it was

a faith which failed to thoroughly persuade men and lead them into its joy and power. The few elite souls of earth again had satisfied themselves of this truth, beyond a peradventure, and sunned their souls in the light of it. But to the mass of men it was clouded over with doubt.

In that immortal picture of the last hours of Socrates with his disciples, Plato represents Socrates asking his friends, after he had reasoned with them concerning immortality, "What they thought of the argument and whether there was anything wanting." To which, Simmias replied—"I must confess, Socrates, that doubts did arise in our minds, and each of us was urging and inciting the other to put the question which we wanted to have answered and which neither of us liked to ask, fearing that our importunity might be troublesome at such a time as this." Encouraged by Socrates, to speak frankly of his doubts, Simmias replied—"I dare say that you, Socrates, feel as I do, how very hard or almost impossible is the attainment of any certainty about questions such as these in the present life."

The Emperor Julian writes in one place—"I am

not one of those who disbelieve the immortality of the soul: but the gods alone can know; man can only conjecture that secret."

In a once popular book of the early Church, a kind of romance, dating from the middle of the second century and entitled "The Clementine Homilies," Clement of Rome is represented as telling the history of his conversion to Christianity.

From my earliest youth I thought much concerning death, and of what may be after death. When I die, shall I cease to exist, and be remembered no more? Has the world been made, and what was there before it was made? In order to learn something definite about these and similar questions, I used to resort to the schools of philosophers. But naught else did I see than the setting up and knocking down of doctrines, and strifes and contentions, and artificial reasonings and invention of premises. Now the opinion prevailed that the soul is immortal, now that it is mortal. If the former, I was glad; if the latter, I was sorrowful. Perceiving that opinions were deemed true or false according to the ability of those who maintained them, and not according to their real nature, I was more than ever perplexed. Wherefor I groaned from the depths of my soul. For neither was I able to establish anything, nor could I refrain from solicitude concerning such themes. And again, I said to myself:

Why do I labor in vain? If I am not to live after death I need not distress myself now while I am alive. I will reserve my grief till that day when, ceasing to exist, I shall cease to be sad. But if I am to exist, of what advantage is it to me now to distress myself? And immediately another thought came to me: Shall I not suffer worse there than now? If I do not live piously, shall I not be tormented like Sisyphus and Ixion and Tantalus? And again I replied—But there is no truth in such stories. But if there be? Therefore, said I, since the matter is uncertain, it is safer for me to live piously. But I am not fully persuaded what is that righteous thing that is pleasing to God, neither do I know whether the soul is immortal or mortal, nor do I find any sure doctrine, nor can I abstain from such reasonings. What am I to do? I will go into Egypt, and seek and find a magician, and will persuade him with large bribes to conjure up a soul. And so I shall learn, by ocular proof whether the soul is immortal.

At last Clement found what he had so long sought. Hearing of Christ and his Apostles, he made up his mind to find them out and learn from them. He first found Barnabas. That which most impressed him in the preaching of Barnabas was the fact that he did not concern himself with the objections of the philosophers, their subtle

questions and their ridicule of his simple and illogical discourses, but that he calmly declared such things as he had heard and seen Jesus do and say. Such things as he had heard and seen Jesus do and say—herein lay the power of the Apostolic preaching.

This was the pathetic and tragic longing of the soul of man which was met so satisfactorily in Christianity. The pagans, thus longing for some certitude concerning the life to come, turned to their Christian friends and found them rejoicing in an absolute conviction—a conviction that sustained them under all the trials of life, and which enabled them to go to the stake, not only willingly, but joyously; which made them covet martyrdom as the greatest gift and blessing of life. Perplexed and doubting pagans saw these unlettered Christians thrown into the arena, to be devoured by wild beasts, with an expression upon their faces of serene and seraphic bliss that told the tale of the inner certitude in which they went to meet death hungrily. One of the first philosophically minded pagans to become converted to Christianity was also one of the first martyrs of the young Church.

Justin the Martyr was denounced before the prefect of his city as a Christian, and was brought before Junius Rusticus for examination. He "quietly explained who he was and what was his occupation; that he had himself sought and found the truth, and that now when any one came to him he communicated to him the teachings of the truth. 'Art thou not, then, a Christian?' asked the Prefect; and Justin replied: 'Yes, I am a Christian.' . . . The Prefect turned again to Justin, and asked mockingly: 'Listen, thou who art called learned, and believest that thou knowest the true doctrines, art thou persuaded that when thou shalt have been scourged and beheaded, thou wilt then ascend into Heaven?' 'I hope,' replied Justin, 'to receive Christ's gracious gift, when I shall have endured all those things.' 'Thou really thinkest, then, that thou wilt ascend into Heaven, and there receive a recompense?' asked the Prefect yet more scornfully. 'I not merely think so, but I know and am thoroughly convinced of it,' answered Justin." [1]

That this was no momentary exaltation of the

[1] Uhlhorn, page 290.

martyr is clear from the whole tenor of the literature of the early Church, which was pervaded with this same serene and sunny confidence in immortality. It is clear from a study of the Catacombs —at once the meeting-places and the burial-places of the early Christians. There, on every hand, are still to be seen the funereal symbols of the pagan world—expressing, one and all, the consternation and dismay, the doubt and horror, which filled the souls of men in the presence of death. By their side we see the new symbols of the new faith—the carved and graven signs in the rocks of the joy and the peace in believing with which the Christians met the same death.

Everywhere in the pagan faiths the better men were longing for a nobler and more earnest life; for a clearer vision of what life should be, and for a fresh and stronger power to attain that life. The sense of sin which was stealing across the world had awakened a hunger and a thirst after righteousness, a longing for goodness, such as the earlier paganism had little known. Even where there was an intellectual knowledge of the higher ethical life for which men were longing, as notably among

the Stoics, there was little power to realize that nobler life. You will not find in Paul clearer and stronger declarations concerning the true life of man than you will find in Seneca, the great Roman Stoic. But Paul's life was all of a piece—a consistent whole; a devotion of his powers to the pursuit and attainment of the character which he outlined so loftily in his letters; a victory in which he won that for which he longed. Seneca's life, on the other hand, betrays that wretched duality of aspiration and conduct which shows that the moral power was lacking.

The astonishing vogue of the Mysteries is explainable only by their partial satisfaction of this newly awakened hunger of the soul of man for a more earnest moral life, for freedom from sin, for the attainment of holiness.

A part of this aspiration was a longing for truer and closer bonds of brotherhood. Realizing, as antiquity had not done, the enormity of the class divisions which were growing up in the Empire, the new sweet sense of humanity reached out in longings for fellowship and fraternity. This was the object set before them by the secret societies

of workingmen throughout the Empire. To a considerable extent the members of these little brotherhoods did enter upon some truer fraternity. But the power to spread the enthusiasm of humanity seemed lacking. The great world outside these little brotherhoods went on in the old competition, in the ancient selfishness.

This longing of the soul of man was met in Christianity. Earnest pagans, dissatisfied with their life and clouded in their aspirations, longing for something better but failing to find the power to achieve it, turned to their Christian friends and found in them the clear vision of man's true life and the power to attain that life. The Emperor Julian, in his attempt to restore and reform paganism, writes to the High Priest of Galatia urging him to stir the priesthood of the old religion to an imitation of the Christians. The intensely earnest Emperor bids his High Priest see that the ministers under him emulate the Christians in "their holiness of life." The younger Pliny, writing to the Emperor Tragan concerning the Christians in Bithynia over which he was Governor, declares that "they further bound themselves by an oath"

(plainly, the Baptismal vow) "never to commit any crime, but to abstain from robbery, theft, impurity; never to break their word nor to deny a trust when summoned to deliver it." Speaking of one of the early persecutions, Dean Milman, in his "History of Christianity," declares "that the chief honors of this memorable martyrdom were assigned to a female, a slave. Blandina shared in all the most excruciating sufferings of the most distinguished victims; she equalled them in the calm and unpretending superiority to every pain which malice, irritated and licensed, as it were, to exceed, if it were possible, its own barbarities on the person of a slave, could invent. She was selected by the peculiar vengeance of the prosecutors, whose astonishment probably increased their malignity, for new and unprecedented tortures, which she bore with the same equable magnanimity. . . . The wearied executioners wondered that her life could endure under the horrid succession of torments which they inflicted. Blandina's only reply was—'I am a Christian, and no wickedness is practiced among us.'"

The Apologies presented to the Emperors by

the first philanthropic champions of Christianity, dwelt at length upon this singular fact concerning the early Christians. Athenagoras, addressing the heathen, pleads—"You can find uneducated persons, artisans and old women, who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of the Christian doctrine, yet by their deeds exhibit the benefit arising from their choice."

One of the noblest writings of the early Church is a letter of an unknown author to a certain Diognetus. It contains a classic description of the new life of this new sect.

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. . . . But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them

as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all; they have children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of Heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all; they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.[1]

The beliefs of the early Christians were thus seen in definite application. Their faith found expression in socialism—a contrast to the usages of the times that challenged attention and respect. Record has been made in earlier chapters of their

[1] "Apostolic Fathers," vol. I., page 307.—Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

development of the older custom of the secret supper. And this the Christians adapted and sanctified into a memorial of the Last Supper, perpetuating a Holy Communion. The Holy Communion was their true communion; the true communion conceived the true commonwealth. The idea was brought to a practice of "what's thine's mine; what's mine's thine," and those who observed could see that this was really lived. And so it was reported: "All that believed were together and had all things common: sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need." For was not their Christ the first representative of the people? He walked with the highest and the lowest, and was brother to one as much as to the other; he shared with his fellows, nor craved possessions beyond his needs; he lived for aims that called not for material riches; he preached the cause of the people, while he led the citizens in their duties to authority and their obligations to life. In all ways he championed the needy, and brought all men together in a brotherhood that builded upon love—the foundation of commonwealth, the symbol of communion.

How did all this come about in Christianity?

There could have been but one answer to this question, as we see from all the analogies of history. Ethical and spiritual religions start from a personal founder. Nature worships originate without personal founders. They need none. They grow out of man's recognition of the mystery of power in Nature. They are not distinctively ethical or spiritual. But the religion which grows out of man's recognition of a moral power within him, of a spiritual nature out of which he has sprung and towards which he is to aspire—such a religion must needs grow out of some personal life embodying this moral earnestness and living in this spiritual consciousness. Religions of this kind, then, arise in a life; the life is the light of men. So we can trace the story of all great ethical and spiritual religions from an Abraham, a Moses, a Zoroaster, a Buddha, a Mohammed. A living man attains in his own spirit the consciousness of certitude amid the infinite and eternal mysteries; he enters into the consciousness of the Infinite and Divine Presence; he sees, through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the life which lies beyond;

he recognizes the supreme power in life as the moral law within, and enshrines that law in a fleshly tabernacle, living, himself, as a manifestation of that God, Who is Goodness.

There must have been a personal founder for Christianity whose life constituted the new religion. If we did not find him in history we should have to discover him. We should be absolutely sure that he was there, as the fact out of which Christianity arose.[1]

We do know of him. The whole outer body of Christianity bears his imprint. He has enstamped his personality upon Christianity, indelibly. The Sacred Books of Christianity, the New Testament writings, are full of him from beginning to end: the story of his life in the Gospels; the exposition of his teachings in the Epistles; the inspiration of life which flowed from his life, through every word uttered by every Apostle and Disciple, through

[1] Dr. G. Stanley Hall says in his book, "Jesus, the Christ, in the Light of Psychology": "If pragmatic is higher than either historic or theoretic certainty and reality, we have here the very truth of truth. There are incitations within us which give us psychic orientation to Jesus, and even if his historical existence were disproven, we should have to postulate some such person at about this time, place and circumstance."

every life lived by the followers of this Master. The institutions of Christianity testify to him. The Church bears his name. It is the abiding witness to the fact that he has lived. Were there no other attestation of his having been an historical fact, this one would amply suffice. The central sacrament of the Church points, by tradition, to his own personal institution. It is a personal memorial of the founder of Christianity. The symbolisms of the Church point to him. The most sacred sign in our Christian symbolism is the sign of the cross—the instrument of his crucifixion. The two great Creeds of the Church embody, as their central article of belief, the Church's abiding recognition of the fact of his life.

A carpenter's son of Nazareth of Galilee so lived that his life became the embodiment of a new religion. Amid the infinite and eternal mysteries no doubt shadowed him, no cloud chilled him, no fog perplexed him. He was serenely sure, calmly confident, walking in an abiding certitude. "We speak that which we do know, and testify that which we have seen." His conviction was more than a faith—it was a knowledge. It was

an immediate intuition. It was an open consciousness. In him the human consciousness, which in the rest of men has attained to self-consciousness, opened into God consciousness. He was as conscious of God as the normal person is conscious of himself.

God was to him the one living and true God; a being infinitely pure and holy, just and good; the Eternal who loveth righteousness; the source and spring of our being; the moral and spiritual perfection towards which we all aspire; the original of our nature, in whose image we are made; Our Father which art in Heaven.

Death, to him, was only a step from the seen world into the unseen; only a link between two stages of being; only a passage down into the valley of the shadow of death, that thus, life may rise into the light of life. He never argued about immortality—he assumed it as one of the certitudes of life. His own consciousness of immortality sealed itself in the one historic attestation of the continuance of life beyond the grave. As he lifted the veil which hides the other world from our sight, and passed behind, he turned again,

and holding that veil open, showed himself to those outside—as living still. He reappeared after death to his disciples, and made them know the reality of his continued existence, and in the reality of his continued existence, the reality of immortality for all men.

The life of goodness which all men recognize more or less dimly, and aspire unto more or less earnestly, he saw clearly and realized habitually. Resisting every temptation, mastering every sin, he won the victory over all evil and entered into the life of holiness here upon the earth. He made his human life one with the divine life in all goodness. So perfect was his life, that, in him, men saw their ideals realized, their visions materialized, and could frame no better description of the perfect human life than that it should follow in the blessed steps of his most holy life. Breathing all sweetness of sympathy, all gentleness of kindness, all depth of love, he bound all men unto himself in the bands of a man, the bonds of human brotherhood. Men of all races, of all religions, of all classes, of all conditions, nay, of all characters, he recognized as one with himself in the family of the

All Father, the children with himself of our Father which art in Heaven. To the service of his brothers, as the child of his Father, he freely gave his life.

It was not merely that he taught these truths—taught men that certitude was possible, taught men to know God as one, Our Father which art in Heaven, taught men to know the reality of immortality, taught men to know what goodness is, and that it is possible to attain unto it here on earth—it was far more than this. Teaching, as never man taught before, the truths of God, of immortality, of human life; speaking, not as the Scribes and the Pharisees, but as one having authority—he taught all these truths in the only way in which they can be persuasively taught—by living them. He, himself, was all that he taught. Herein was his power over men. Thus it was that, as men came up to him and touched him, they were thrilled with his own life, and became partakers with him of the divine nature.

In the Book of the Acts of the Martyrs, we find the story of the first famous martyrdom, the heroic end of Polycarp. As he stood on the

funeral pile, the venerable Christian breathed this prayer:

> Oh, Lord God Almighty, Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee, the God of angels and powers, and of the whole creation and of all the race of the righteous who lived before Thee, I bless Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Thy witnesses, in the cup of Thy Christ.

Each organism, in growing, grows out from and around one original germ cell. That one cell is the basis and beginning of the whole complex life of the developed organism. Dividing and re-dividing itself, each additional cell renewing the same work, all the elements of nutrition absorbed into the miniature organism are charged with its vitality, impressed with its characteristics, and moulded by the form which is shrined within it—the unseen mystery of all existence.

The story of the Christian Church repeats the story of every organism of nature. The original germ cell of Christianity was Jesus himself. Forth from him, and around him, grew other cells, other

human personalities, charged with his life, breathed through and through with his spirit, moulded after his own human form divine. In his life, a few souls touched him and were vitalized from him. From him they received the new truth which filled their minds—from him, the new life which filled their being. Each man went forth to touch others and charge them anew with the life which he had received from the Master. And so, on and on again, in the successive touch of soul with soul, the mystery of life first breathed into humanity in Nazareth of Galilee has spread until we have our Christianity today, eighteen centuries after Christ, the outgrowth from his own living personality. The Christian Church is the body which has grown around the soul of Jesus, the Christ of God. Every individual in that Church is a cell in the mighty organism of which Jesus is the informing life. We live still from his life; we think over his thoughts; we breathe again his spirit. We are vitalized, all of us, from that original germ cell of human personality which God fashioned into such perfect form in Nazareth of Galilee.

The difference between Christianity and the

paganisms with which it contended, lay simply in the fact of this one informing, vitalizing personality which was the force in Christianity, and the absence of which was the weakness of paganism. Despite every resemblance and parallelism—and the resemblances and parallelisms were, as has been seen in these studies, astonishingly close,—there was this essential difference. Judaism held nearly all the truths of Christianity. What it lacked was power to realize them and apply them; a soul breathing within its body and transforming every member of the organism into its own nature. What the devout Jews of the age of Jesus lacked was the moral and spiritual power which those their fellows found who followed Jesus as the Master of life. Roman stoicism held so many of the ethical truths of Christianity that we are oftentimes perplexed and baffled in reading its masters to find men who saw so much yet did not see more; who knew so clearly what the right was, yet failed so wretchedly in the power to live it and to live in the joy of it. The new Platonism held so much of the philosophy of Christianity that, in reading its teachings, we seem to be reading our own Christian

philosophizings—only, with a something missing. As one of the Neo-Platonists said when the introduction to the Gospel of St. John was brought to his knowledge—"The barbarian Platonizes." We, turning back to his writings and the writings of his followers, can say—"The Grecian Christianizes." This new Platonism held the orthodox theology of Christianity, its conception of the Divine Logos, or Thought-Word, clearly and fully evolved. It could have affirmed the Nicene Creed up to the point where we affirm—"Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." They could have accepted the whole of the introduction of the Gospel according to St. John, save the one vital clause—"And The Word Was Made Flesh." It was the Athanasian philosophy, but Jesus was left out.

And leaving him out, the moral and spiritual power was left out which was pulsing through Christianity. Leaving this out, all else was in vain. Wise men came to recognize that there was something lacking, and that that was the power of a divinely human personality embodying man's

visions of goodness, living in conscious communion with God, setting the pattern for all men, which they might follow as their religion. And so came the most pathetic picture of the failing paganism—its attempt, partly a conscious imitation of Christianity, partly an unconscious impulse out of which grew the legend of Apollonius of Tyana; the story, largely mythical, of the great pagan who lived much as had the great Jew who founded Christianity. Around the person of Apollonius of Tyana there grew up the pagan myth of the divinely human One, the Son of God, working marvels, communing consciously with his unseen Father, healing the sick, mastering sins—doing all that Jesus did. But it was in vain. It was only an imitation of the reality, only an echo of the true word of God.

What do we make of Jesus himself in the evolution of religion? Was he, too, an evolution? The answer is both yes and no. When the fullness of the times came, God sent forth His Son. This classic word is the affirmation of a reality in the thought that Jesus, the Christ of God, is an evolution. He has come, in the fullness of the times, as

the ripened flower and fruitage of the moral and spiritual processes of development through which humanity has been led up after God. He is the outcome of all the yearning of the life of antiquity. There is a false way of stating the fact that Jesus the Christ is the fulfillment of Judaism. Our fathers so stated this thought as to find in ancient prophecy clear and conscious prediction of his coming—a prediction growing ever more and more defined, ever more and more minute. Not thus do we look at it. But we, too, can see through the whole story of Israel the growth of a vision of God and the growth of a conception of man, which together have found their perfect realization in Jesus of Nazareth. In this most living sense He is an evolution of Judaism—its crown and consummation, its flower and its fruitage; that unto which it yearned, that which it was struggling to bring into being; that by which, in bringing into being, its mission has been fulfilled.

So we do not build our thought of Jesus as the fulfillment of ancient paganism upon a mystic word of the Jewish writings, which pointed to him as the desire of all nations—a reading which we

can no longer allow. But nonetheless does he prove himself to be the desire of all nations—that unto which all the higher religions of antiquity reached; that thought of God, that ideal of man, after which one and all strove. Every great religion tended in one direction. The focal point was far beyond them all. That focal point is found in the story of Jesus—in his truth and life. In that truth and life we read what all were reaching forward to, what no one clearly found. The mystic aspects of paganism justify themselves in the light of the story of Jesus. The hidden wisdom of paganism has become the open secret of mankind in Him. The story of man's soul, as read dimly in the Great Mysteries of Greece and Egypt, is now seen clearly in the life of Jesus the Christ. In Him we recognize the divine man in us all, passing through that sixfold stage of spiritual experience—through baptism, temptation, passion, burial, resurrection, and ascension into the life of God. Here is the suffering, dying, rising God, the parable of whose mysterious being the cosmos itself reads us; the hieroglyph of whose story the soul of man pictures. The secret

of the ages is opened in the story of the Nazarene.

Still for the generations that are to come, on through the far future, we must needs believe that the story of religion in our Western World is to be the story of the continued growth of that mystic organism whose indwelling soul is the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God.

For the individual the question of religion is the question not of connection with the outer body of the Church but of living personal touch with the soul which is at the center of that body, the Christ of God. His thought is the truth on which we are to feed. His belief is the faith in which we are to live. His consciousness is our certitude. His life is our pattern. His spirit is our inspiration. To touch Him is to thrill with the life of God. To love Him and consecrate our lives to Him is to enter into pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father.

So the bond of brotherhood which the world is striving to fashion, in which to bind up the alienating classes and races of mankind in good will and peace, is the cord of love which that living heart

throws out through all the members of the body growing round it—through each one today, if we but let His life flow into us.

One of the most beautiful narratives of heroic martyrdom which the early Church records is the tale of the saintly Felicitas—a young mother who met her doom about the beginning of the third century. The whole story is one of exquisite beauty and of surpassing nobleness. While she was awaiting the execution of her sentence she was in severe suffering—a dangerous illness seizing her. For a moment she gave way to her sufferings. "How then," said one of the servants of the prison, "if you cannot endure these pains, will you endure exposure to the wild beasts?" To which she replied—"I bear now my own sufferings; then, there will be one within me who will bear my sufferings for me, because I shall suffer for His sake."

X

A SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

THE external story of Christianity is explained in the scientific phrase—the survival of the fittest. This is the popular statement of the general law by which we account for the fact that some forms of life disappear from the earth while others are perpetuated, alike among individuals and species and genera. It is the law of nature that one shall be taken and another left. Some die and others live; some yield place to others who thrive. The story of life is the story of a struggle for existence. A constant effort is necessary in order to live. In this effort one organism succeeds because it is adapted to its environment, whereas another fails because it has not adjusted itself to its environment. The adaptation may be, and generally is, the result of slight, slow successive changes wrought upon the organism in its effort to get a

living out of nature. We may not argue under this law that the organism which survives is the best in itself, but only that it is the best under the given circumstances—the best fitted to its conditions. It may not be ideally the best, but only practically the best. Yet the large and general result of this struggle, and of the natural selection of that which is fittest to survive, is an organic ascent of life. Somehow or other out of this rude equation there results the progress which we call evolution. Thus nature mounts from the clam to man. The organic change is necessary to enable plants and animals to get a living work for higher forms and types of life. Out of this struggle for existence, seemingly so ignoble, there issues a movement towards an ideal. So the survival of the fittest becomes, speaking bye and large, a survival of the best.

This is a universal law. We are familiar with it as it holds over the life of plants and animals; we know it as dominating over the struggle between nations and races. But we do not quite so quickly realize that it holds over governments and laws and institutions, arts and philosophies, and

all the forms of the noblest life of man. Yet is it true that every form of human life is in continual struggle with rival forms, and out of this clash between ideas and institutions is evolved the progress which we call civilization.

This law holds over religions. All that goes to the outward embodiment of religion—institutions, rites, symbols, worships, beliefs—are thus evolved. A multitudinous variety of more or less similar institutions, rites, symbols, worships, beliefs, contend, one with another, and that which is best fitted to survive, survives; and out of this survival of the fittest there issues a survival of the best, a progress of humanity in religion.

History reveals the fact that religions have been in a continual struggle for existence from the beginning of the world until now. A traveler on the Nile, stopping to examine its fascinating temple ruins, discovers upon them signs that one and the same temple has been dedicated at different times to different Gods. Built by one monarch, in honor of some favorite deity to whom it was solemnly consecrated and with whose name it was signed and sealed, in a later generation a succeed-

ing monarch has rededicated it to another god scratching out the previous inscription and engraving the name of the new deity to whose honor it has been set aside afresh. The cartouche of one divinity is thus altered or erased to make place for the cartouche of another divinity. In this historic fact we have the record of the large movements of historic religions. Successive phases of religion contending one with the other, a fierce struggle has gone on, out of which one has issued victor for the time.

A similar story is told in Greece, as we all remember from our schoolboy studies of its mythology. The successive dynasties of the gods of Olympus simply stand for so many successive forms of religion. These differing forms, antagonistic one to the other, struggled one with the other, and the best fitted to survive did survive for the time.

Israel's story tells the same tale. Before Moses the tribes of Beni Israel had each its own god or gods. With Moses a great revolution was wrought. The tribal gods retired to the background, in the Pantheon of Israel, and the central position was

taken by Jehovah, or Jah. Then followed generations of struggle between Jehovah, from his citadel in Jerusalem, and the local gods of the tribes who reigned still in the provinces. This story is embalmed in the historical books of the Old Testament, and is brought out vividly by our new criticism. And this strife between the warring gods of Israel is only the strife between so many different religions, so many different religious conceptions and ideas and beliefs. So when the prophets arose a still higher form of religion entered the field, contending with Jehovahism, the accepted religion of the nation. The religion of the Prophets won the day—not without compromises and sacrifices. It took gradual possession of the people, and survived because it was fittest to survive in the enlarging mental and moral and spiritual life of the people.

History thus shows itself to be full of the obituary notices of dead religions. Earth is strewn with the graves of buried religions. Institutions, once venerable, have crumbled into ruins. Rites, once celebrated with pomp and pageantry, are forgotten. Symbolisms, once sacred to men,

are now mere curios of archæology. Beliefs, once vital and inspiring and commanding, are now merely superstitions.

This story of the conflict between religions out of which there issues a survival of the fittest is peculiarly the story of the age in which Christianity arose. As never before in the history of man, this was an era of cosmopolitanism. Rome had achieved a well-nigh universal Empire. All round the shores of the Mediterranean the eagles of her legions kept watch and ward. The boundaries of her Empire stretched from Briton to Persia. Her fleets traversed the Mediterranean, passed through the Red Sea, circumnavigated Spain and Portugal, interchanging the commerce of the East and the West. Her magnificent system of roads linked Paris and Marseilles with Damascus and Alexandria in an intricate network of post routes, supplied at frequent intervals with lodging houses and relays of horses and every convenience for rapid travel and interchange of letters. In the Roman forum the golden milestone marked the center of this magnificent Empire, forth from which, as the hub, these road spokes branched in every direc-

tion, reaching to the furthest circumference of the Empire. Roman law ruled every province. National boundaries fell away. Race prejudices disappeared. Along the streets of Rome might be seen, in an afternoon's walk, the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired barbarian of Briton, the red-haired Frank, the swarthy Moor, the copper-skinned Eastern, the cultivated Greek—men from every land, each in his own provincial costume, each speaking his own local tongue. Along the quays of the Tiber were moored ships, bound for every part of the known world. In this era of cosmopolitanism, under this imperial unity, more was interchanged between the provinces than the custom-house officers levied duty upon, and more than the merchants invoiced. There was an exchange not only of wares, but of ideas. Thoughts passed freely from land to land. Greek was the polite speech of the world as French was the polite speech of Europe a couple of generations ago. It was the fashion then to travel, as it is the fashion now. The gilded youth of Rome considered his education incomplete until he had attended the schools of philosophy in Greece and had carried his letter of

credit with him in a tour of the Mediterranean. Nations who had been isolated one from the other, races which had known one of the other, only in the misleading light of prejudice, came to stand face to face. Rome became the clearing house of the world's thought. There was a cross-fertilization of ideas going on, such as history had never known before.

Rome was as hospitable to the different religions of earth as she was to the various races of the world. As all the provinces flocked to Rome, thither trooped all the religions. In the imperial city temples were erected to Serapis and Isis, to Mithra and the Sun, to every deity who had a following in the Empire—a following represented in the imperial city. It was an age of universal toleration. Religious freedom was all embracing. A man was free to follow the dictates of his own conscience. The wealthy and ardent followers of every great religion sought to popularize that religion in the capital of the world, hoping to make it the dominant religion of the Empire. Noble Roman ladies might be seen flocking to the temple of Isis, and attending upon the solemn pageantry of

her worship as conducted by the white-surpliced, tonsured priests from Egypt. The cult of Mithra vied with the religion of Isis in attracting the attention of those who were dissatisfied with the official religion of the Empire. Men, ahungered after ethical and spiritual life, longing to know something of human destiny, were drawn into the following of this Eastern religion which appealed so strongly to all that is most earnest in human nature. Judaism, strange as it may seem, despite the prejudices surrounding its peculiar people, notwithstanding the suspicion which attached to a race which held itself aloof from all other races, guarded so jealously its sacred, spiritual treasure, and insisted so strenuously upon its peculiar rites—Judaism, all this to the contrary, obtained an immense following throughout the Empire and in Rome itself. The Jews went everywhere in the train of commerce and trade. They formed a whole quarter in the great city of Alexandria, numbering perhaps two hundred thousand souls. They had their own district in Rome, where also they formed a considerable element of the population. In an age which was

growingly dissatisfied with official religion, hungering after some certitude in religion, longing for some power to inspire life, Judaism, with its simple, pure, spiritual faith, appealed strongly. It made hosts of converts. Roman senators and Roman matrons were, if not open perverts to Israel, at least secret sympathizers with it. So vast had become this influence of Judaism upon Rome that at one time it promised to conquer the Roman Empire and become the dominant religion. It failed—because it had given birth to a daughter whose career was destined to realize all the dreams of its mother.

All these great and venerable religions were competing in the free and open field of the Roman Empire for the popular suffrage. A veritable struggle for existence was going on between Isis and Mithra and Jehovah and Jupiter—between the religions for which these deities stood. Into this arena there appeared suddenly a new and youthful combatant. Among all these competitors in the field of religion, none seemed so little likely to win as this newest religion.

It began from the least possible beginnings. A

little handful of Jews, held in disrepute in their own land because of their heretical tendencies, separating themselves at first from their fellows simply because they believed that a certain carpenter's son, of an obscure hamlet in Galilee, was the Christ—such was the Christian Church when it first entered this imperial arena.

It came with all the taint of its mother, Judaism, upon it. It, too, was an intolerant religion, a religion claiming to be the one only true faith among the many false faiths. It entered, by inheritance, into all the suspicion and prejudice which the peculiarities of Judaism entailed upon it.

It was the religion not of the wealthy, the cultivated, the fashionable, but of the poor, the unknown, the despised of earth. Its followers were the slaves and freed men who formed the ranks of the wage-workers of the Empire. Not many of the mighty were called to this first following of the new faith. Its emissaries found welcome only among those who themselves had no recognition from society. Its meeting places were the hospitable synagogues of Judaism, or the lodge rooms of

the secret societies of workingmen, or the subterranean burial chambers of the Catacombs. When Paul came to visit Rome his first meetings were in some of the flats in the tall brick tenements lining the Tiber. His audience consisted of the horny-handed sons of toil. Jewish costermongers, Syrian boat-men, craftsmen from the different lands of earth, who crowded into the quarters of the poor—these were his following. As Renan said, most of those in his audience smelled of garlic. Celsus, one of the most powerful opponents of Christianity in its early days, said tauntingly, its followers were cobblers and blacksmiths, tent-weavers and carpenters.

At the best, in those early days,the aristocracy of the new Church were the artisans and craftsmen of the great industrial labor unions of the Empire. Few philosophers or men of culture were found in its ranks. It had, at first, no men capable of entering into controversy with the trained disputants of paganism. It numbered among its followers no orators, no men of literature, no poets—none of the men whose intellectual force might carry it forward toward success. As Celsus, in another

place, sneered, "they were a dumb folk only babbling in the corners."

This stripling among the religions of earth, this weakling among the great faiths, dared to enter into contest with the giants of religion, the mighty forces of paganism, trained through the ages, panoplied with every known armor of defence that the learning and skill of man could contrive.

In this contest Christianity found arrayed against itself all most powerful elements of society. The mass of the people loved their ancient traditional festivals and usages—the year filled up with celebrations of the gods and goddesses in whom they had been taught to believe in infancy; the sacred rites and ceremonies with which every important event of life, from birth to death, was associated. Christianity, in its first enthusiasm, swept the field clear of all traditional customs and usages, rites and ceremonies associated with paganism, and thus opposed to itself one of the strongest instincts of humanity. The average man, then as now, hated the man who sought to live above the common customs and to follow standards higher than those recognized generally.

The Puritan, even in his first fresh days of sincerity, was not an altogether lovely character to the pleasure-loving man. And the Christian was the Puritan of the Roman Empire. As such he was cordially detested and earnestly hated by the men whose own conception of life was having a good time.

Conservatives opposed the radicalism of this new religion. The conservative instinct, strong in all ages, was particularly strong in this time when the official piety of the Empire was *pietas* toward the past, reverence towards the fathers, an obedient following in the ways of tradition. So the established order stood aghast at a new religion which turned away from the official altars, disowned the piety due towards the past, foreswore the faith of the fathers and started out with a brand-new religion as it seemed. The Roman conservative felt towards Christianity much as the good Churchman feels towards the come-outer and the free thinker—toward the man who will not attend church and disowns the institutions of religion. Christianity seemed to the average man not a religion but an irreligion. Did not these

Christians forsake the altars of the Gods and refuse to do homage to the ancient divinities? Did they not deny the faith of the fathers, and turn their backs upon the holy temples? All this was an impiety, and therefore they seemed to the religious of their day to be nothing else but atheists. This was what they were continually charged with being. Again and again in great prosecutions the cry arose—"Away with the atheists!" Today the tables are reversed; and we Christians, who are so ready to condemn agnostics and other nonconformists as being atheists and infidels, feel it strange to find that our progenitors were thus charged in the days gone by.

All whose ideal was respectability turned away from a new religion which was utterly unfashionable. Its followers, drawn from the hosts of slaves and freed men who did the menial work of civilization, found among themselves few of the *élite* of earth. In those early Christian assemblies no Roman senators, no grandames, were present; no men of wealth and no women of culture. It was throughout the Empire as in Israel, where the taunt arose—Have any of the Imperial household

embraced this new religion? Are any of the nobility converts to this new faith? And the great mass of men and women who longed, above all, to be in the social swim turned away from this upstart religion, which was only the faith of the despised and the outcast of earth.

Vested interests opposed Christianity, with all the power of property. The official religion of the State was thoroughly organized throughout the Empire, and represented vast plants in the form of temples and their endowments, and vast properties in the trades that ministered to the temple worship, and vast incomes in the salaries of the priests of the hierarchy. Every interest concerned in the maintenance of paganism opposed resolutely this new religion which would have confiscated those properties and estopped those businesses and ended those incomes.

Culture opposed Christianity. All the learning and philosophy and art and science of the day stood together in the maintenance of the recognized religions of the Empire. They were venerable with age, hallowed with associations and mellowed with poetry. They fostered schools of

philosophy and were, in turn, defended by the philosophers. The intellectual life of the age was strong and culture was widespread. All the cultivated classes, without exception, rallied to the support of the various forms of paganism. On the other hand stood this infant religion, this faith of the plain people, among whom were found no philosophers, no scholars, not many learned, not many mighty. It was the taunt of the cultured of the age that Christianity was a superstition, a pestilent superstition. The brilliant Emperor Julian sneeringly declared that culture was not for the followers of the crucified carpenter. They only needed to "believe." There was ground enough for these taunts. The early Christians accepted the most impossible miracles unquestioningly. They read their Old Testament literally. The stories of the Old Testament which still offend cultivated minds offended cultivated minds in the Roman Empire, equally. But these stories gave no offence to the mechanics and slaves who composed the Christian Church. Celsus, the most brilliant and able of the early antagonists of Christianity, was never weary of poking fun at the

blind credulity of the Christians and their stupid superstitions.

The State opposed this new religion with all the might of its strong arm. It is not difficult to understand why this was so. The recognized religion of the Empire was the official religion of the State. It was a State religion. Conformity to its customs formed part of the duties of citizenship. These Christians, who would not burn incense upon the altars of the gods, who would not offer homage to the genius of the Emperors, who refused any act of worship to the head of the State —these were not only impious men but dangerous citizens. They were not only disloyal to the faith of the fathers—they were disloyal to the Empire itself. This suspicion was aggravated by the steadfast refusal of the early Christians to serve in the army. Their opposition to war was intense. Their belief in non-resistance was a principle. They were the Quakers of the Roman Empire. And whatever the tolerance of Rome, a limit was drawn when citizens refused military service—that service, upon which, the very perpetuities of the Empire depended.

Yet further, the Christians, in their private assemblages, were identified with the secret societies which were spread throughout the Empire. Trades unions and labor organizations, incorporated under the law of the Empire, in forms permissible by the law, as burial societies and mutual benefit societies, were spread far and wide, enrolling a vast membership. They had become serious factors in the State—alike by their numbers and by their wealth. They had become objects of suspicion to the State. Property, then as now, was always ready to be scared by the bugaboo of social revolution. These new, so-called religious assemblies, which were known to meet in the lodge-rooms of the labor organizations and to gather furtively in the Catacombs; these secret societies plainly composed of the suspected workingmen—entered into the inheritance of suspicion which attached to all similar societies in the Empire. The State was in constant dread of a social revolution. The attitude of the early Christians towards property was thoroughly socialistic. Thus it came about naturally that the State looked askance upon them, and ere long proceeded to active opposition.

This is the secret of the persecutions of the Christians. Rome was tolerant without limit of religion pure and simple. A man might believe what he chose and worship what he willed, so long as he remained a good citizen, loyal to the Empire, and in no wise threatened property. But the moment that property seemed to be threatened, Rome was prepared to crush, remorselessly, its secret foe. The story of the first three centuries is a story of repeated persecutions. Long intervals elapsed between the outbursts of popular wrath and imperial enmity, but, from time to time, circumstances re-awakened suspicion, re-excited enmity and persecution renewed itself. Nero began it when, after the great conflagration of Rome, the popular hatred towards the Christians suggested them as the natural scapegoat for this calamity. In the Imperial gardens Christian men and women, bound upon uplifted stakes, covered with tar, on which cotton was scattered, were made living torches to illumine the Imperial festivities. At first there was considerable restraint in these persecutions, and the fact of being a Christian was not made a criminal offence. No encourage-

ment was given to informers against Christians. Only when a man resolutely insisted upon denying his duty to the State and on refusing the homage due to the Emperor was he subjected to torture or to death. But by degrees, as Christianity grew in power and became, therefore, more feared and hated, restraint was thrown off, until, at last, in fearful paroxysms of wrath, the whole power of the State was employed with the deliberate and avowed purpose of crushing out Christianity itself. Then the fact of being a Christian became a criminal offence. Edicts condemned them to death without waiting for charges against them. The most philosophic, the noblest, the most profoundly religious of the Emperors, Marcus Aurelius, permitted persecution—doubtless on the grounds already indicated. In these outbursts of fury against the Christians, men, women and children were burned at the stake, were beheaded, were tortured, were thrown to the lions in the arena, were enclosed in nets and then tossed by angry bulls, were dressed in skins of wolves to be set upon by savage dogs. Thousands and tens of thousands were thus slaughtered in those bloody

years. Never was a more continuous systematic effort made to crush a religion by the power of persecution. The result of it all was that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

Through all these elements of opposition Christianity survived; in spite of them all it steadily prospered. Generation by generation it increased mightily, until, at the end of the third century, the battle was won. Constantine recognized it as the dominant religion—the only religion capable of unifying his Empire—and established it as the religion of the State.

One final despairing effort was made after Constantine to revive paganism and crush Christianity. A group of remarkable men, intellectual, highly educated, nobly earnest, spiritually minded, consecrated themselves to the renewal of the noblest life of their forefathers. They gave themselves to the fresh study of Plato, and to the interpretation of the ancient religions in the light of his philosophy. They developed a philosophic system which was in all respects the parallel of orthodox Christianity, save that its doctrine of the Logos, or the Divine Thought Word, stopped

short at the culmination of the Christian truth—that the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. These men devoted their powers to teaching their thought and to inspiring in men their own high life. Most illustrious of their converts was one of the most brilliant of the Cæsars. Flavius Claudius Julianus, better known simply as Julian, was the nephew of the great Constantine. He was a man of splendid intellectual gifts, some of whose learned treatises are still extant. He was devoted to philosophy, and found his joy, even when upon the Imperial throne, in study. He was, at the same time, a vigorous man of affairs, a successful administrator and organizer. He was, moreover, a brilliant general, idolized, deified by his soldiers. Yet, more, he was a man of thoroughly noble nature, profoundly earnest and deeply religious. He was brought up as a Christian, but, unfortunately, as a Christian of the court, under the influences of the fashionable Christianity of his day. He became learned in dogmatic controversy, but remained ignorant of spiritual Christianity. His natural piety led him to become a reader in the church, and thus to enter upon the lowest grade of

clerical orders. What he saw of the superficial Christianity around him revolted him. As soon as any freedom came to him in his life of practical imprisonment under the suspicion of the Emperor, he turned to the Greek classics with the hunger of a starved mind. From Plato and Aristotle he drew deep draughts of intellectual inspiration. He became an enthusiast for Greek culture. Neoplatonism, the new Platonism, filled his soul with philosophy and religious enthusiasm. On coming to the Empire he threw off the disguise of his youth and avowed himself a follower of the ancient religion. Sacrifices were once more offered to the Gods of Rome, and Julian himself officiated at the altars. He felt himself called, as by a divine voice, to the great work of restoring the religion of the fathers. When the Emperor set the gait, all the court kept step. Paganism once more became fashionable. All the power of the court was thrown into this work of restoration. Temples that had been turned into churches were re-dedicated to pagan divinities. New temples were built. They were richly re-endowed. The old priesthoods were re-established. The ancient wor-

ships were everywhere renewed. More Christian than many of the Christians, this great heathen refused to persecute those who would not follow him. "Blows and bodily injuries," said he, "are not the means by which to change a man's convictions." More than the restoration of paganism did Julian seek—he sought its reformation. Himself a man of simplest and most abstemious life, pure amid all the corruptions of the court, dividing his time between the studies which he loved and his duties as a ruler, he insisted upon holding the renewed religion of the fathers up to his own high standards.

If our religion [he writes to the High Priest of Galatea] does not make the progress we could wish, the blame lies with those who profess it. The Gods have done great things for us, above our hopes and petitions. But is it right that we should be satisfied with their favors, and neglect those things which the impiety of the Christians has cultivated, their hospitality to strangers, their care of the graves, their holiness of life? We should earnestly seek all these things.

He commanded that the priesthood should be purged of unworthy members, and prohibited all

priests from going to the theatre and frequenting the taverns.

With a certain feverishness of zeal he journeyed from province to province, everywhere stimulating, encouraging, rebuking, stirring men to greater efforts. He hurried from temple to temple, brought sacrifice after sacrifice, knelt for hours before his Gods and covered their statues with kisses. Then, at night, he sat in silence at his writing table and gave vent to his bitterness and disgust with everything. In those still hours he wrote his works, full of brilliant wit and charged with bitterest hatred against the Galileans and their carpenter's son.

But all in vain. When the rhetorician Libanius scornfully asked a Christian priest—"What is your carpenter's son doing now?" the priest replied—"He is now making a coffin for your Emperor." In the midst of these incessant labors Julian was called to the East to meet a Persian invasion, and died at the head of his troops in heroic combat. Tradition among the Christians reported that his dying cry was—"Oh, Nazarene, thou hast conquered." Others said that

his last words were—"Sun, thou hast betrayed me."

It was a splendid, brilliant effort—but it was the effort of despair. It was a movement against the whole trend of history. No such movement can succeed, no matter what the brilliance of its leader, no matter what the might of its resources. During the reign of Julian the friends of Athanasius had expressed their anxiety and fear. He responded—"It is only a little cloud. It will pass." It passed—and with it paganism passed forever from the Western world. It passed—and Christianity remained. In the struggle for existence Christianity was successful.

Paganism lingered still upon the earth, but as a ghost haunts the scenes of its old life. Pagans remained here and there, but they were, as the word itself indicates, Pagani, only the villagers, the rude, unlettered, superstitious folk—the cultivated people, the men and women of the great towns and cities, having gone bodily over to Christianity.

The same process repeated itself as Christianity came into the presence of the religions of the north

of Europe—the religions of the German woods, of the fields of Briton, of the Scandinavian Fjiords. Longfellow, in the saga of Thor and the White Christ, tells the whole story. Thor struggled with the White Christ, but he was defeated.

Isis and Jupiter bowed before the Christ, and were no longer supreme. Out of the struggle of the Titans, Christianity came forth victorious.

Putting aside all so-called supernatural claims resulting from this victory, a purely natural claim remains. It is inconceivable that out of such a conflict a religion unfitted to survive should survive. That would be an exception to the universal law of nature. It follows, then, that Christianity conquered because it was most worthy of conquering. It was a survival of the fittest.

In such survival of the fittest there is also an absorption into the survivor of the elements which fed those lives that failed. In the dark forest, where the trees crowd each other to get at the air and sunshine, the most vital tree survives. The weakly trees around it sicken and die—make room for it to send its roots down into the earth and suck up the nourishment that they would have taken

from it; make room for it to send its boughs up into the air and absorb into its leaves the sunshine which they would have divided with it. The successful tree gathers into itself the lives of the unsuccessful trees. It was a New Zealand belief that when a chief slew his rival and ate him the spirit of the dead warrior passed into the victor. This superstition held a philosophic truth.

There is yet a higher conception of this survival of the fittest. In the struggle for existence which we discern in nature there is not merely the strife between different forms of life on the same plane, by which one lives and another dies, one survives and another succumbs, but there is issuing, from this struggle of individual lives, the gradual forming of a new and higher order of life which follows the universal law. Out of the survival of the fittest individuals, by slow successive changes, variations develop, gathering ever fresh increments of force, until new varieties arise—new species, genera and orders. It is in this way that physical science accounts for the gradual evolution of life upon the earth. The mineral world reappears in the vegetable world, ennobled. The vegetable

life re-emerges in animal life, spiritualized. Each successive order of animal life takes up the best elements in the order preceding it, and transfigures them. The story of the material world is a story of an endless series of transfigurations. In man the whole chain of lower life re-appears in glorified forms.

The realm of mind exhibits the same law. In the conflict of thought the winning truth absorbs whatever was true in the error which was defeated. In the great philosophical systems of our century are to be found absorbed the leading thought of every philosopher, back to Plato and Aristotle; yea, back to the unknown dreamers upon the shores of the Ganges, centuries earlier. In the great scientific system which Herbert Spencer has given to his generation one may find the essence of theories which have made single names illustrious through the whole story of the march of intellect. Find the greatest of the later religions of the earth, the religion which has risen in the heart of civilization, which has grappled with the most powerful of ancient religions and mastered them, and we may be sure that we have found that system which, in

some sense, is a synthesis of all the faiths that preceded it. This can be affirmed without any reference to the, so-called, supernatural claims of Christianity, but simply and solely as the natural law of life. Christianity could not have survived in such a struggle without having absorbed into itself the best elements of Roman Stoicism, of Grecian Philosophy and of Eastern Mysticism.

Thus into the successful competitor in this conflict among religions, there passed the vitality of every perishing paganism. Christianity drew in to itself, under the mysterious law of life, every vital element of the faiths which it dispossessed. It proved to have the power of adaptation by which it absorbed and assimilated whatever in the surrounding paganisms proved worthy of being preserved and perpetuated. Thus, it sucked up, out of Judaism, its highest truth, monotheism—its belief in the one living and true God. Thus, it drew in from paganism the sense of the omnipresence of God in manifold forms, which was the truth underlying polytheism; and recognized manifestations or masks or forms of God, in all the different powers and energies of nature. It drew

from Judaism its profound moral earnestness, its high spiritual aspiration, its longing for communion with the living God. It drew also from paganism these same ethical and spiritual cravings which found manifestation in the Sacred Mysteries, and embodied them in that hunger and thirst after righteousness which was its peculiar distinction.

The summation of the earlier chapters finds place here. Alike in its sacred books, its institutions, its sacraments, its symbols and its creeds, Christianity accepted from paganism all that proved acceptable, gathered into itself all that was vital, drew up into its own life every true idea and noble ideal, every deep inspiration and lofty aspiration, every great faith and earnest hope and sweet charity, and became the flowering of paganism, the efflorescence of every religion of antiquity. The hidden wisdom of paganism, the inner and esoteric religion of the few, became the open secret of Christianity; the truth told in a tale which entered in at lowly doors and became the heritage of the common people of Christendom. And then that sacred sign of the cross, which was to antiquity the cypher of universal spiritual religion, conserv-

ing the four great truths of Immortality, Regeneration, Redemption and Divine Love, become the chosen sign and symbol of the new religion, which proclaimed to all men, far and wide, this fourfold truth of life.

This is the outward story of the success of Christianity, the secret by which it became the heir of the ages.

XI

THE ISSUES

How strange, in the light of this story of Christianity, seems that criticism in a once famous book, in which the hero of the tale, at the crisis of his experience, declares[1]:

I see God's purposes in quite other proportions as it were. Christianity seems to me something small and local. Behind it, around it—including it—I see the great drama of the world, sweeping on—led by God—from change to change, from act to act. It is not that Christianity is false, but that it is only an imperfect human reflection of a part of truth. Truth has never been, can never be, contained in any one creed or system!

Doubtless. But what if the one creed or system is the outgrowth of all creeds and systems of the ancient world? What if the part of truth con-

[1] "Robert Elsmere," page 414.

tained in it, however imperfect as of necessity it must needs be, is a part as large as antiquity—as large as the cosmopolitanism out of which it has grown? Truly, the great drama of the world sweeps on, led by God, from change to change, from act to act; but, in the light of this retrospect of history, the very core of that great drama seems to be Christianity. So far from being small and local, then, our Christianity looms large and universal—as large as earth, as universal as man.

When a young maple on your lawn or in your pasture shows signs of arrested life, it is a serious matter. The sapling has but slight rootings in the soil. Young life always sickens and dies easily. It is no great affair to uproot the young tree and put out a new one. When the venerable oak seems ailing, you have no suspicion that it is dying. You never think of cutting it down and planting a new one. It has taken generations to grow that noble tree. It ought to live for generations yet to come. What it wants is some better treatment. You dig about its roots to let the air purify and stimulate them. You search for some parasitical life that may be draining its strength. If it has

gone too much to leafage it may need pruning. At the worst, it may call for some heroic surgical treatment to drive its life back upon the roots. Those roots run out far and wide below the surface. They insure for it a vitality corresponding to this depth and width of rooting.

Such is the vitality of Christianity. In its veins flows the sap of the ages, the juices of life sucked up from those wide and deep rootings through which it takes hold on humanity itself. Where, then, shall we seek for any new religion, save in a renewal of this ancient and venerable one —itself the quintessence of all preceding religions? What of new shall we expect in the great tree of religion but the tippings of the ever green spires with the tender color of a new springtide?

Of the essential nature of piety—the ancient *pietas*, or reverence for the past—is that conservatism which, conscious of all the imperfections of a religion, itself the expression of an imperfect humanity, does, none the less, see in it the highest expression of that imperfect humanity yet reached, and holds, therefore, loyalty to its institutions as the venerable heirlooms of the ages, the sacred

shrines in which man's soul has so jealously guarded the secret of the universe. Though thus wisely conservative, we who cling to the historic forms of our venerable religion, cling to them as expecting them to grow and enlarge under the swelling life of the Divine Spirit within man; becoming thus ever more and more fit for the use of man, more and more worthy to image the God who is in man.

In that Christianity has grown out of the great religions preceding it, absorbed into itself their vital elements and become thus their reproduction in nobler and higher forms, we can expect that as Christianity confronts the other great religions of the world in the continued struggle for existence, it will prove itself capable afresh, capable of a continued survival as the fittest. Of the best in the great religions of the East not a little has already been absorbed into the ground which has nourished Christianity. Of the other truths these great religions of the East have to teach us—and they are neither few nor trifling—may we not feel confident that our venerable religion can absorb and assimilate them and turn them into material for

new growth? He who has thus seen Christianity emerging from the conflict of the past, victor over every greatest form of faith, must needs expect a renewal of the story in this new age of cosmopolitanism in which the great religions of the world once more confront each other. He will welcome every teacher from the East who comes bringing the hidden wisdom of his orient to unveil to our Western eyes; but he will welcome him with a serene confidence that these truths of the East will be taken up into the ever-growing truth of the West—which, as the truth of progressive humanity, must needs be the truth of the world.

For this is the singular fact concerning Christianity: that, growing in the East and absorbing the best of every Eastern faith, it has become the religion of the West—that is, of the progressive portion of humanity—and grows with its growth, expanding with its enlargement, purifying itself with its ennoblement, deepening with its increasing earnestness, and still leading the leading nations of the earth on toward the light and life of God.

The East accepts the Western civilization as the progressive civilization of the world. So it must

needs accept the religion of the West as the religion of the progressive life of the world, and pour its own best life once more into the re-growth and the renewal of Christianity. Every great religion of the East will bring to this renewed evolution of Christianity something true and vital. The outcome of this new age of cosmopolitanism will be a new Christianity, gathering into itself once more, as it did eighteen centuries ago, the life of the world.

But no disguise should be made of, and no exception is here taken to, the prevalent and thoughtful belief that serious changes are necessary in Christianity to fit it to grow into the religion of the future. Intellectual readjustments are needful, in order that it may adapt itself to the new conditions of our new knowledge. Ethical readjustments are needful, in order that it may adapt itself to the new conditions of our life, political, social and economic. The whole perspective study of catholicity is a broad aspect of these issues —the term itself being but one guiding caption for the trend of our search for the true way. Because of the felt need of readjustment, and because of

the temporary and partial paralysis which always ensues upon an epoch of transition, when life is, for the moment, arrested, the suspicion has gotten abroad that Christianity is decadent. How far astray such a suspicion is is seen after a survey of the wide and deep rootings of Christianity.

Despite all these appearances of arrested life, what other and manifold appearances there are of deep and exhaustless vitality in our venerable religion. In the intellectual life of the church we see the most alert and earnest inquiry going on in every field of thought, determined effort to readjust the ancient forms of faith to the new knowledge. Never in the history of Christianity has a single generation wrought a mightier change in the intellectual outlook of the Church than is being wrought in the generation through which we are passing. The minds of the thinkers in the Church are grappling with every problem of our new knowledge, and grappling with it successfully. Even in our own day, in which this movement of reconstruction has begun, we can see it so far advanced as to prophesy the success which will

attend the effort to run the new knowledge into the old moulds of thought—the form of sound words handed down to us from the fathers. There never has been a period in the history of the Church when its intellectual vitality has been more intense than in our own day.

Nor has there ever been a period in the history of the Church when its philanthropic activity has been greater than in this, our own day and generation. The enthusiasm of humanity is attacking every evil of society, hesitating not to grapple with the most serious evils that afflict mankind, daring to attempt the solution of the most profound problems which have exercised the conscience of man through the ages. The new ideal of service is growing within the mind of the Church, consecrating men and women of wealth and culture and leisure to all forms of ministry upon their fellowmen. Movements like that of the Salvation Army and that of God's Volunteers, seeking and saving that which is lost in the very spirit of Christ, attest the undying power of the love of Jesus. Monster meetings, such as those which have been held in our cities from the days of the inspiring guidance

of Mr. Moody, to the perspiring impelling of "Billy" Sunday, manifest undiminished interest in the subject of personal religion. The largest social organizations in the country are carried on, with vast memberships and in high state of efficiency, under the name of our religion—the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. Within the soul of Christendom a new social spirit is awaking, calling man not merely to the ministries of mercy, but to the solemn duty of justice. In our own generation a visibly new and higher conception of the ethical relationships of business has asserted itself, promising to master even the deepest passion of mankind—the love of money. The fresh forces of the Christian spirit are making over again every field of human helpfulness, in the spirit of Christ; so that we are today witnessing the growth of a new education, a new philanthropy, a new penology, a new political economy. In all this we see the signs of the undying ethical vitality in our venerable religion.

A material age, so called, may be impressed with a material presentation of this unexhausted vital-

ity of Christianity. In the United States, "the religious bodies, Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and non-Christian, had in 1916 an aggregate of over 40,000,000 communicants or members. . . . In 1890 the total religious strength was 20,618,000, so that in twenty-six years following the net increase has been 19,398,000 or 94 per cent., while the gain in the population of the country for the same period has been about 39,000,000 or 61 per cent. The churches therefore gained faster than the population during this period."[1] The latest United States census finds no complete estimate of the total money contributions for church work, but in the preceding census the Hon. Robert P. Porter stated that it would be "Perfectly safe to put the figure at $150,000,000." Such active, positive and reconstructive forces in the intellectual and moral life of religion, are witnessed in no other religion upon the face of the earth today.

No new religion, then, is needed, but only the old religion renewed—not the cutting down of the

[1] "Federal Council Year Book," 1917, page 206.

old tree, but the vitalizing of the old life which still flows from the roots, through the trunk, to every outermost branch and leaf; only the quickening of the sap within the veins, beneath the sun of a new springtide. A religion which casts its roots out as far and wide and deep as Christianity must draw upon the imperishable resources of the soul of man for the freshening forces needed in every new stage of its development. The study of Christianity in evolution may content us at this point with a deepened conviction that our children will shelter themselves beneath the shadow of the same tree of life under which we have found rest and sustenance.

For the quickening and utilization of its vitality we turn again to a study of the needs of readjustment of Christianity to meet the issues of the age. In broader study suited to the open book of the broader age, we are guided by what insight we can bring to bear upon those same human instincts and possibilities that are outworking through this transitionary day as they were through the evolutionary centuries that have passed. In these findings of the day that point to the religion of the

morrow, should we expect a breakdown of the universal law? Are we to fear greater secularism instead of greater unity; a self-exhausting Babel of theological tongues instead of a self-strengthening symphony of religious convictions; the destructive artificiality of the dark ages instead of the constructive rationality of our age of enlightenment? Rather can there be found in the outcome the pure reward of logic and reason and spiritual sincerity—a proved catholicity. Religion gains strength for the future and once again becomes man's daily life as all the studies and interests of the day, deepening and widening, reach common laws and a universal light. When the rationalization of theology and the spiritual reward of science meet there comes a cosmic understanding, assurance and inspiration that, more and more, the dogmatist is learning to call reason, and the very atheist to call religion.

The dominant theological movement of the nineteenth century was gendered by the dominant intellectual and moral forces of that century. Chief among these unquestionably have been physical science, biblical criticism, the compara-

tive study of religion, commerce and travel and democracy.

The direction of the movement engendered by the interaction of these forces is not hard to determine. All alike are working toward the ideas of unity, universality, naturalness (the reign of law) and progressiveness.

Physical science is disclosing the nature of the universe as a system which is at unity within itself, a cosmos which is one throughout all its parts. It multiplies vastly the varieties of life, but connects them all one with another, binding the most widely separated spheres together in one vital unity, making all "parts of one stupendous whole." Thus we now recognize, through spectrum analysis, one and the same body of elements in all the worlds of space; magnetic attractions and radio-activities give one and the same system of laws throughout the stellar systems; in all forms of life we find the same forces working everywhere in the universe. Even do we begin to find universal appearances or symbols for the universal principles, for the flower forms recur through the gamut of manifestations from tiny crystal to stupendous nebulæ.

These same flower forms, procured also in the tracings of the vibrations of tuned strings, may verily be the written music of the spheres.

Physical science is eliminating the realm of chaos and introducing a realm of order everywhere. We know, now, that in the heavens above, in the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth, law reigns. "Wild facts," which seem to happen, serve to make us aware of reaches of law which have been as yet unsuspected.

Physical science reveals to us as its most magnificent generalization the doctrine of evolution; the belief that all things are in a perpetual flux, that nothing is fixed or final, that there is a veritable organic ascent of life, that, from the bioplasmic cell upward to the archangel, life is ever in continual unfoldment toward higher forms.

The direction which these tendencies of physical science are forcing upon the traditional theology of Christendom is obvious. They are leading our thought away from the differences of mankind toward its essential unity. They are teaching us to regard men as verily of one blood. We are discerning a common nature beneath the variant types

of humanity; are recognizing one mind acting in men of all races; creating the same convictions in the souls of Hindoos and Egyptians, Englishmen and Frenchmen; stirring the same aspirations in Persian and Greek, American and—may we yet hope—German; waking the same reverences in the spirit of man of all lands and of all ages.

All life being under the universal reign of law, religious life must fit into the general scheme. Religion is now seen to be the impression made upon the spiritual nature of man by the universe which, as it impresses itself upon his reason and imagination, calls into being philosophy and poetry and art and music and science. Religion is not a realm beyond law—it is the highest form of the universal law. Miracles recede into the background of our modern religious outlook. They can only be unusual manifestations of the usual order, glimpses into higher realms of law, operations of forces hitherto undreamed of, but which have been always at work and which have worked harmoniously with other and known forces. Whatever the wonders of the New Testament may be, they are one and the same with the wonder of

the blush of the rose and of the poise of the planets "singing on their heavenly way." Religion is taking on, therefore, a naturalistic aspect; not as denying supernatural forces, but as denying simply any extra-natural means and methods in the action of the soul of the universe.

In an age of science the one thing which can surely be affirmed of theology is that it is not fixed and final. Theology, like every other product of man's being, must be an expression of that universe, the highest generalization of which yet reached is known to us as Evolution. Creeds that do not change can be no true creeds. The deposit of faith is the mud of the bottom of the river of life, not the clear flowing waters of the stream.

The tendency of biblical criticism, as a special form of literary and historical criticism, lies in the same general direction with that taken by science. It assumes, in its very existence, that the bible is a book like other books; that, whatever else it may be, it is a genuine fragment of human literature; that it is subject to the same general conditions as all forms of literature; that it has been evolved under the same laws as other forms of

letters. The progress of biblical criticism sets steadily towards conclusions which confirm this conception out of which it grew. The bible takes its place among other books, more and more indisputably. It ceases to be an exception and becomes a member of a class in literature—one, though the highest, among the sacred books of the world.

It is no longer a miracle—it is a part of the natural order of the world of letters, whatever supernatural influences flowed into it and still flow from it. Its authority, therefore, is not anything oracular, inerrant, final—it is the authority of the truth which it utters. That authority, therefore, is necessarily open to the challenge of criticism, liable to a subpœna before the higher bar of reason. The powers of the human mind are thrown open to all new knowledge; the soul of man receives the freedom of the city of God—the universe.

The tendency of the comparative study of religion is in the same general direction. This really brand-new study of our age is revealing, beyond a peradventure, the fact that the principles

disclosed by science in its study of the physical world are those which disclose themselves to the scientific study of religion as governing the soul. The great forms of Unity, Law, Progress, rise regnant in the realm of religion.

Religions are many—religion proves to be one. Human nature being one and the same, and the universe confronted by man being one and the same, human thought of the problem of the universe tends to develop towards the same forms. Given the same stage of evolution, the same environment, and there will appear the same ideas, institutions, ideals, beliefs, aspirations, cults and worships. The astonishing parallelisms between the great religions of the earth prove to be no mere accidents, no cribbings from Moses by Plato, no benevolent assimilations of the ideas of Buddhism by Christianity.

There is, as we are now beginning to see, no reality in the distinction between the true religion and false religions, save as a matter of degrees in development. All religions are false as they are imperfect, or as they become corrupt. All religions are true as they develop out of their rude,

primitive beginnings, toward ethical and spiritual ideals. That in each which is vital, is true—the truth of the one Light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Religion itself is thus coming to be seen as a natural evolution from a supernatural source. The institutions and beliefs of Christianity form no mere exception in a universal order—they are the highest outcome of that universal order, the flowering forth of the spiritual nature of man. They have no miraculous, oracular authority. They are not fixed and final forms. They are naturally evolved, naturally evolving still. Their authority over man is the authority of their reasonableness. The Church is divine as the State is divine,—a real divineness, though a natural one; imposing no tyranny, subjecting no reason, enslaving no conscience.

The immense international commerce and travel brought about by the steam engine in the nineteenth century has not been without a profound effect upon the thought of man, even upon his theological thought. And this influence tends in the same general direction with that into which

theology is being driven by the other intellectual forces of our day.

The merchant and the tourist are enforcing the movement started by the scholar in the comparative study of religion. We are finding that the heathen is also human. The heathen is the imperfect Christian, the Christian the evolved heathen. All souls are proving to be of one order. We no longer dream that virtue is a product of Christian lands and vice of heathen soil. Wherever we wander in our globe-trotting, under every form of religion, we find, subject to the influences of different environments and different stages of evolution, the same aspirations after goodness, the same reverences before the mysteries of the universe, one and the same faith and hope and love. The petty parochialism of piety passes on into a universalism of religion. The cosmopolitanism of commerce is correlating into the catholicity of Christianity.

The influence of democracy upon theology is also in the same general direction. Democracy is the succession of the demos to the throne of the king. External authority gives way to internal authority. Democracy is the denial of caste, the

affirmation of the common stuff of manhood, whether in the Brahmin or the Pariah, the nobleman or the serf. It is the repudiation of the right of one elite class of mankind to monopolize any of the good things of the earth for its own special use; whether those good things be the ignoble luxuries which money can buy, or those better things of the mind and soul, "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold," the truths upon which man's spirit liveth. Democracy is the rejection of the belief that there are any pets of God in His earthly family—coal barons, for whom He stores the earth with anthracite, or elect races on whom He lavishes the gifts of His Spirit. It is the affirmation of the truth that all men are "the bairns," as St. John phrases it, of a just and loving Father, who shares His estate, material and spiritual, equitably among His children. Democracy, making away from artificial authority toward natural authority, from privilege toward equal opportunity, from injustice enthroned upon the universe toward the universal reign of justice and love, is everywhere steadily, surely, revolutionizing theology, and, in its way,

forcing on the new era which is looming large above the horizon of earth.

The general direction of the theological movement of the nineteenth century, as resultant from the interaction of the thought forces of the century, must now be unmistakably clear. This movement is everywhere in the direction of expansion, the pushing forward of limited, partial, narrow conceptions into large and ever-enlarging conceptions,—universal, necessary, natural.

Every particular doctrine of the Reformation Confessions, the secondary body of beliefs growing round the true creeds of Christendom, is dropping whatever is petty, special, particular, exclusive, artificial, unnatural, irrational and unethical in its dogmatic forms, and is taking on aspects which are big, generic, universal, natural, rational and ethical. What can not survive this process will fall away and die. Such inversely succulent sections of our Thirty-nine Articles as these will be missed altogether in the theology of the twentieth century. Under the climbing life of man and his clearing vision of God, all beliefs of the Reformation theology that have sap in them will grow out

into forms shaping themselves after the order of the universe, as we are learning to know it, rational, sane, consistent with justice, consonant with the goodness which in man is seen to be the shadow of the absolute rectitude of God.

A similar process, on-going in the Catholic creeds, will issue in a transformation of them which need not necessarily involve any verbal changes, but merely a realignment of their beliefs around the new theism; an interpretation of them in terms of universality, naturalness, progressiveness. They will be recognized not simply as forms of the Christian consciousness, but as something larger—forms of the human consciousness; not as belonging only to the species Christianity, but to the genus humanity. In them will be recognized the mystic truths of that "hidden wisdom" which was to be found in every land, under every system of religion.

The purely spiritual contents of the great Catholic creeds, the forgiveness of sins, etc., will be perceived to be the heritage of our common humanity; becoming positive affirmations of faith wherever a great religion evolves into the stage of ethical and spiritual life.

The two fundamental doctrines of the Catholic creeds, the doctrine of God and the doctrine of immortality, will be recognized, not as the exclusive possession of Christendom, but as the common possession of mankind.

The intellectual form in which the fundamental truth of God is cast will be discerned as no mere peculiarity of Christianity, but as the mould of thought everywhere fashioned by the mind of man, when that mind has attained maturity. The doctrine of the Trinity is even now seen to be in no sense whatever a distinctive Christian doctrine. It is already perceived that it antedates Christianity, that it was evolved in almost every great religion of antiquity, that its presence in Christendom is due to the assimilative process under which Christian Gnosticism absorbed so much of Eastern cosmological speculation, that it is the necessary thought-form in which the recognition of the variety in unity of the Divine Being must needs be cast by the human intellect.

The doctrine of the Incarnation, the heart of the Christian creeds, is issuing from the theological

movement of our age as no merely Christian doctrine, but a human truth.

It is thus coming to be seen that the idea of an Incarnation of The Logos is as old as man's philosophy, as widespread as his life on earth; that it is a common heritage of humanity, a doctrine whose note is universality; that it denotes no mere exception in a universe of law and order, but that it is the very heart of this universe, the key to the riddle of life; that it connotes not alone an embodying of the Divine Being in one individual, of one epoch of history, but that it is the symbol of a universal process, whereby and wherein the universe itself is the body of the Infinite and Eternal Spirit; whereby and wherein man, as the crown and consummation of the organic processes of the universe, is the supreme ensouling of the Divine Being; whereby and wherein what is true, in differing degrees, of each man, of the greater souls among men, is supremely true of the Supreme Man, the Man in whom the goodness which is the heart of the creation lives forth perfectly, so that we reverently say of Him: "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us; and we behold

His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of graciousness and truth."

The Catholic creeds will thus affirm to our children, not merely the contents of the Christian consciousness, but the contents of the human consciousness, as historically evolved in the processes of the ages. They will be reverenced and trusted as reflecting in man's thought the mystic secrets of the cosmos, the constitution and order of the universe. But they will be reverenced for their real nature, not for their imagined character. They will be taken for what they are, not for what they are not; symbols of a knowledge which is as natural as other human knowledge, not for oracles of supernatural information. As "cosmic creeds" they can never again be fancied fixed and final forms of faith, but will, of necessity, be recognized as pliant and plastic symbols of the fluent processes of evolving life, opening ever new and higher significances in "germinant fulfilments."

The historic personality who is at the heart of the Catholic creeds will be found to have withstood the critical processes which threatened to resolve it into legend and myth, and, instead of

issuing as fable, to issue as fact, having the solidity of history—the rock which thence forth never more can be shaken. The Man Christ Jesus, in the moral miracle of His perfect character, in the sacramental mystery of His cosmic consciousness, will stand forth forever as the sacred shrine of man's hope and faith, the mercy seat of the loving God. In Him the human ideal will continue to be reverently seen embodied, that ideal after which our human lives are to pattern themselves in all loving loyalty. In His mirroring eyes coming generations will read the secret of the universe, and see in the power in which we live and move and have our being, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

The nineteenth century may have been a period of the decline of great convictions—the twentieth century will prove a period of the renewal and the reaffirmation of great convictions. The central faiths of Christendom will be found to warrant themselves as the universal faiths of man, standing plumb upon the deep bedrock of the human reason and conscience, buttressing on our new knowledge in science and philosophy and art and sociology. Man will know that he holds in these

great Christian creeds "the ardent and massive experiences of mankind," in "a form of sound words," forth from which will issue in new activities the spiritual and ethical energy for the regeneration of the world, the realization of the prayer of our Master, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in the heavens."

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